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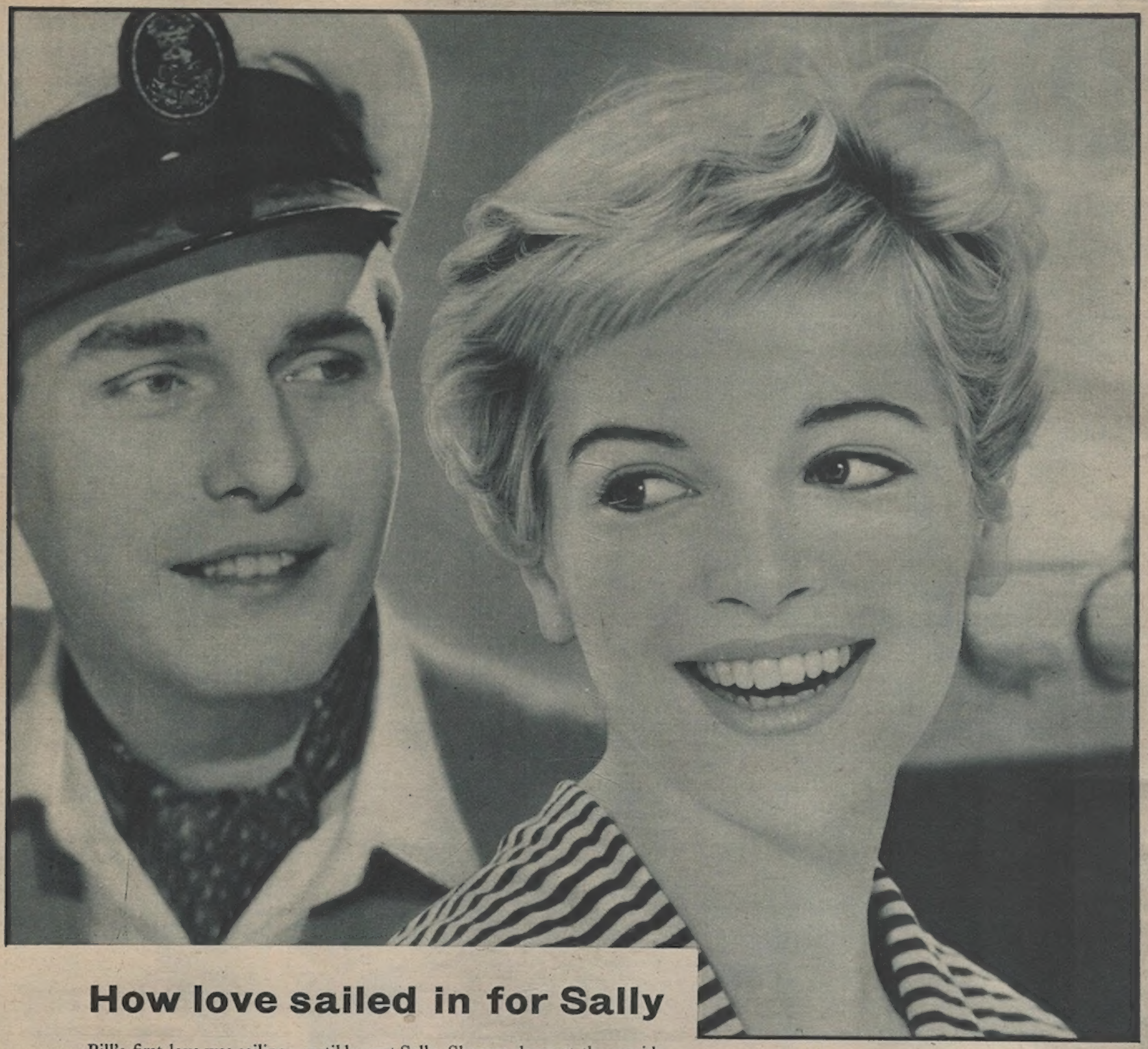

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EDITORIAL

The right to strike

IT is not surprising that the ordinary people of Britain are getting exasperated with strikes, and threats of strikes. This year already they have extended to, among other industries, the mines, docks, railways, newspapers, buses and airways.

There have been official and unofficial strikes for higher wages, strikes for shorter hours, strikes stirred up by Communists, strikes over technicalities, and even a dock strike by one trade union directed against another union.

COMPARATIVELY small groups of workers have dislocated industry far beyond their own confines. Eight hundred men paralysed the national newspapers for a month. A few bus crews disorganized the transport of millions of working Londoners.

MR. TOM O'BRIEN
"Sooner or later, repression"

The feeling has naturally arisen that some small groups of workers are heartlessly victimizing the public to gain their own ends, at any cost to the national economy; and that union leaders, responsible men though most of them are, have loosened their control over their own unionists.

The leaders are well aware of the dangers. Mr. Tom O'Brien, vice-chairman of the Trades Union Congress, utters this warning: "Continuous and contemptuous disregard by sections of our workers of solemn agreements, and of their unions' executive authority, is bound to invite sooner or later the introduction of repressive legislation to prevent such conduct."

Strikers, taken as a whole, are only a tiny proportion of Britain's 23,000,000 strong labour force. But quite small strikes can do serious harm. The Yorkshire pit strike this year lost the nation 800,000 tons of coal. Last year, 700,000 man-days were lost in dock strikes.

THE right to strike is a precious and essential part of an industrial democracy—but only if it be used with a sense of responsibility. It is the duty of union leaders to make full use of negotiating machinery and, if that fails, of recourse to neutral tribunals. It is now urgently their duty to examine the structure of the unions, to ensure that decisions are accepted by the rank and file.

It is the duty of individual workers to reject irresponsible and politically mischievous elements in their own unions, most of whom have attained power through the apathy of their fellow workers.

The government, too, has a task to perform—to speed up the negotiating machinery which now, all too often, works at an exasperatingly slow pace.

By such unromantic but essential means alone can a democracy prevent unnecessary strikes, and avoid any need for a curb on the basic right to strike, which would lead only to further untold industrial strife.

ON OTHER PAGES

Fiction

NIGHT AT THE PLAZA	*by Lionel Davidson*	9
CROSSFIRE	*by John Masters*	20
HICKORY DICKORY DOCK (Part 4)	*by Agatha Christie*	24

Non-Fiction

HOLIDAYMAKERS LEAVE THEIR WORRIES TO INSPECTOR JAMES	*by John Ennis*	13
BORN ON SNOWSHOES (Part 2)	*by Evelyn Berglund Shore*	17
HARRY HOPMAN, THE FOX BEHIND AUSTRALIAN TENNIS	*by Don Everitt*	22
SAFETY GETS A FREE RIDE	*by Martin Bentley*	27

FREE SPEECH: 4, 6. THIS WEEK'S COVER: 6. IT'S THE CUSTOM: 32. GUESS WHAT?: 36. CONSIDER YOUR VERDICT: 41

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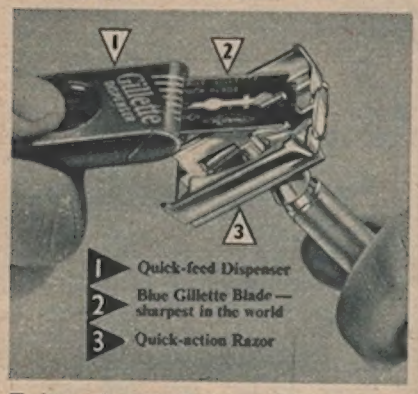

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FREE SPEECH

A spare-time job keeps him fit

SIR MILES THOMAS says (JOHN BULL, May 14) that work after 6 p.m. is bad because your mind is tired, and judgment deteriorates.

I agree—if you come directly from an office desk and sit at another desk at home. But a second job completely and gloriously different to the one you do during the day is a tonic.

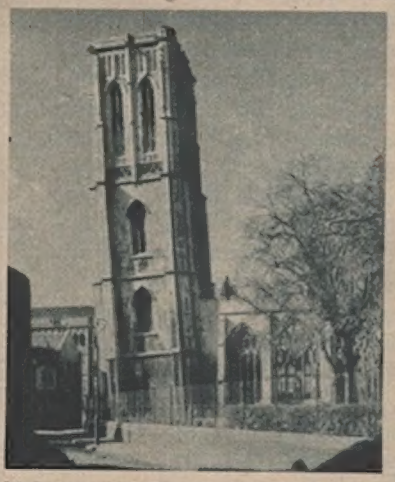
As a schoolmaster specializing in geography and sport, I took up audit work in the evenings. The idea at first was simply to supplement my meagre teacher's income.

My wife put up with it reluctantly, for the sake of the extra savings, but soon noticed my increased appetite and better health.

Now I find myself with a spare time job which I no longer do for the money alone.—M. D., Manchester.

Pisa's Rival

THE famous tower of Pisa is not the only one that leans. The 114 foot



high tower of Temple church, Bristol, in my photograph, has been five feet out of true for six hundred years, and is now to be preserved as a war memorial. In the blitz, sappers mistook it for a bomb casualty, and nearly pulled it down. — R. W., Bristol.

Not So Ancient

RAFFLES looks out from his hansom cab at the statue of Eros (JOHN BULL, May 21). But surely the hansom was a museum piece when Eros was erected?—P. BELL, Carlisle.

Eros was unveiled in 1893. The hansom, invented by Joseph A. Hansom in 1843, was used extensively until the first motor cab—licensed in 1903—hastened its decline. There were still 280 hansoms licensed in 1924, but only three in 1935.

Slippery Sixpences

WHY are so many sixpences in circulation? They slip from the fingers and stick to the gloves: everybody seems anxious to pass them on.

A really useful coin is the twelve-sided threepenny piece. It is seldom seen in some parts of the country, and presumably will soon be in demand for telephone boxes.—R. LINFORD, Hugh Street, Westminster.

"Sixpences are among the most popular coins," says the Royal Mint.

Post Office engineers are planning to adapt coin boxes for threepenny pieces, says the G.P.O. "But 90,000 boxes will have to be altered. It may not happen for years."

Opening Time

EXCEPT for one brand I have yet to buy a sardine tin complete with a key for opening it. The tins are not designed for the usual opener, and although they can be forced this is a messy business. Where are the missing keys?—MRS. M. FISHER, Almond Walk, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

"One hundred keys go with every hundred tins we sell," says a firm of wholesalers. "If the keys are missing, ask your grocer for them."

Hotel Trouble

A DISTINCTION should be made between the larger British hotels, which often are mediocre and impersonal ("Free Speech," June 4). and the average family hotel and

guest house, where the service is usually good.

At some large hotels you have to queue for breakfast, the linen is not always clean and the labyrinth of corridors echoes with noises all night.

If people showed more discrimination in their choice of hotel, standards would improve.—MRS. M. PERCY, Bedford.

. . . Many English hotels are patched-up buildings with carelessly decorated rooms and ancient plumbing. In Switzerland, a tourist-conscious country which goes to great pains to keep itself beautiful, hotels are pulled down when they get old.—L. A. PERKS, Kenilworth Avenue, London, S.W.19.

Tingling Tongues

MR. B. HILL says that birds hate the taste of carbolic powder mixed with grass seed ("Free Speech," May 21). I thought birds had no sense of taste.—S. E. EVANS, Devonshire Road, Smethwick, Staffs.

"Correct," says an ornithologist, "but they have a limited sense of smell. The two senses are interdependent—for example you can't taste food properly when you have a cold. Birds, which have very thin skin on their mouths, would feel a tingle from the carbolic powder."

Happy Cooking

GAS cookers should have more insulation (JOHN BULL, May 21). A refrigerator at twenty degrees Fahrenheit has three inches, but a gas stove, which goes up to 450 degrees, has only one and a quarter inches.

We can't cook on the bottom shelf of our oven, and it takes minutes on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

The dramatic story of a test pilot who flies

AGAINST THE SUN

BEGINS IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Full details on page 18

When friends drop in—

bring out the Bulmer's!

Bulmer's Cider is a grand drink

all the year round, out-of-doors or at home:

refreshing, sparkling, invigorating.

You couldn't ask for anything better!

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Whether you use a vacuum flask only for tea or coffee at work or whether you make full use of it in the home and outdoors for the many purposes it can serve, you will find the new pourer lip an absolute boon. No more drips or dribbles, no more mess.
Simple yet effective, the lip is now fitted to all "THERMOS" Brand Vacuum Flasks without increase in prices.
Every vacuum flask made by "THERMOS" is temperature tested with boiling water and the traditional "THERMOS" quality plus the pourer lip combine to make "THERMOS" Brand your obvious choice of vacuum vessel. Flasks, jugs, jars and bowls from 5 shillings to 6 guineas each, cater for every purpose, indoors or outdoors, where hot or cold food and drink are needed. And what a comfort they are!
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THE PEDIGREE POLISH

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4½D & 6½D

The price is in your favour.

Tonette, Light Brown, Ox-blood, White, Black. Also Dark Tan (6½d. size only)

Dark brown shoes need Tonette or Dark Tan

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

the middle one. Pastries have to go on the top shelf to brown. Ovens need a heat dispersal unit. — F. JONES, Llanrwst, Denbighshire.

"By doubling the insulation of an oven you do not halve the fuel used," says Eric Dunning, the gas scientist. "A heavily insulated oven, operating for short periods, would use more gas than a lightly insulated one. We try to strike a balance between efficiency and economy, and to vary interior heat so that a rice pudding can be cooked at the bottom of an oven, and a joint at the top."

Dilemma Resolved

THE employer in a dilemma ("Free Speech," May 21) should have given his typist the day off, and asked her to make up for lost time later. The girl was honest enough to say she wanted the holiday to see Johnny Ray—for her, an important personal reason—and did not simply stay away, inventing a feeble excuse.—D. LAINE, Acton, London.

. . . He should sack the girl and ponder the saying: "If you think you are indispensable stick a finger into some water, and notice the hole when you take it out."—H. A. R., Lincoln.

. . . The only solution is for everyone, bosses and all, to join the fan club and declare a new public holiday—Johnny Ray day.—A. D. K., Liverpool.

Jug Fanatic

YOUR letter on strange hobbies ("Free Speech," June 4) reminds me of a fine collection of Toby jugs I

John Bevins with some of his jugs

saw at a pub in Hulme, Manchester. The landlord, John Bevins, has about thirty of them.—P. H., Preston, Lancashire.

Bevins, aged sixty-four, has collected the jugs—and old swords, guns, post horns and bows and arrows—for thirty-five years. He spends a day each week touring in search of additional jugs, which may be up to three hundred years old.

Open Question

MANY windows on the Continent open inwards, enabling them to be cleaned easily. Why not ours? — MRS. R. HARING, London, S.W.7.

"Inward-opening windows have been made for many years," says a manufacturer. "Flats with windows fronting communal balconies use them, but in houses they cause obstruction in small rooms, and get in the way of the curtains. Also they are more expensive. Some windows are made with extended hinges, to facilitate cleaning from inside."

Worthwhile Swop

A READER says ("Free Speech," May 21) that southern schools should send children to the midlands and north. In 1953 my school sent a party of children to Northampton. They stayed at the homes of pupils there, and visited factories. The following month the Northampton children came to Essex. Recently, some children went to Wolverhampton, where they visited a coal mine and a chocolate factory. Apart from the educational value they made new friends and saw countryside of a vastly different nature.—D. W. A. JENNING, Chelmsford, Essex.

Tit For Tat

STEAMER trips to France without passports are to be resumed. But each passenger must produce three passport-type photographs, and must fill in personal particulars on a card issued by the shipping company. So we shall have our passports, after all. —A. D. CORRICK, Bournemouth.

"Special identity cards were necessary even before the war," says a south coast shipping firm. "But photographs were not needed."

Savoury Bins

IN the U.S.A. they have lined their dustbins with chemically processed reinforced paper bags. When the dustman calls he lifts the bag out, and there is no clatter or unpleasant smell.—MRS. V. H. FERGUSON, Croft Road, Carlisle.

"Bags would cost several pence each, and could be used only once," says the Institute of Public Cleansing. "Wet materials and hot ashes would damage them." They are not used everywhere in the U.S.A.

Human Nature

INSURANCE companies should run their own garages and do repairs themselves, at cost price, in view of exorbitant garage charges. Premiums could then be reduced.—A. R. SCOTT, Meikle Earnock, Hamilton.

"This has been considered," says an insurance manager. "But human nature being what it is, car owners trust their personal garage, and might suspect repairs done by us."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

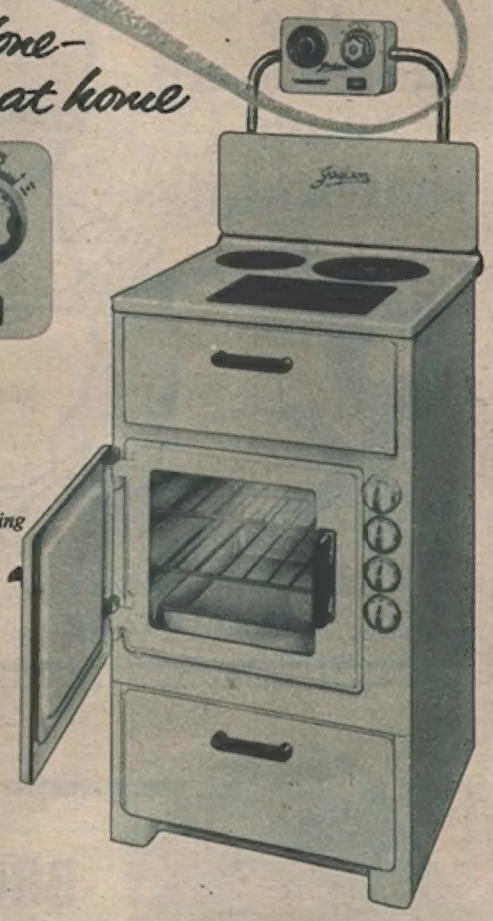
THIS WEEK'S COVER

WINDOW shopping with an attractive girl is always a dangerous pastime, and when she comes to a determined stop outside a bridal shop, disaster is imminent. Still, it would take a very wily bachelor to see that his whole life may be reshaped simply because of a casual nod of approval. Now, when it's almost too late, Tanat Jones's cover bachelor seems to realize that the momentous decision to stay single has to be made soon—or the next step will be the jeweller's for that engagement ring. The artist himself was married, after similar prodding, two years ago. "But I was quite happy to let my wife think that she was being subtle," he says.

For satisfaction cook with Jackson

the MODERN cleaner way!

It cooks alone— when you're not at home



The "Cookalone" Auto-Control Unit can be fitted to all Jackson Electric Cookers. For 190 Series £11.5.0. For 290 Series £12.5.0. Supplied complete with tubular support fittings, or as a wall mounting complete with 6 ft. 4 core cable. Can be fitted to all thermostatically controlled electric cookers. £9.2.6.

The Jackson 194 "Clear-View" Glass Oven Door cooker is the cleanest of all electric cookers to use. Fitted with "Cookalone"—it cooks alone when you're not at home. See the 194 at your local Electricity Service Centre. Cash Price from £40.0.0. or H.P. terms available in most districts.

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it's electric of course!

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Day and Night Protection Against Tooth Decay!

Actual use by hundreds of people has established the effective protection of New Colgate Dental Cream with Gardol! Tests supervised by leading dental authorities—for a full year—show just daily morning and night use guards against the enzymes causing decay every minute of the day and night!

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COLGATE BRIGHTENS TEETH
COLGATE BEAUTIFIES TEETH
COLGATE SWEETENS BREATH
And now!
New Colgate with Gardol provides effective anti-enzyme protection against tooth decay!

CLEANS YOUR BREATH WHILE IT GUARDS YOUR TEETH!

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NEW COLGATE DENTAL CREAM
FOR ALL-DAY PROTECTION, FOR ALL-NIGHT PROTECTION

delicious **O.K** *sauce!*

the grown-up sauce that kiddies love

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1/8 and 3/10 everywhere.

STIMULATES NATURAL HEALING PROCESSES

Night at the Plaza

by ***LIONEL DAVIDSON***

For seventeen years his mother had kept him in cotton-wool. Now he had come to London—to find what life had to offer

A PORTER WAS COMING along the train banging doors, and people were kissing and saying goodbye. Henry leaned out of the carriage window towards his mother and kissed her. "Goodbye, Mother," he said awkwardly. She did not return his kiss, but she said, "Goodbye." Her tone was frigid. She was letting him go without a word or a gesture of reconciliation. He had hurt her cruelly and she wanted him to know it.

The train started. Henry hung out of the window, but his mother made no movement when he waved. He watched until her stiff, unyielding figure was out of sight. Then he dropped down into his seat. He sat there in numb misery, which gradually turned to panic over what he had done.

Henry Denver, seventeen and with a weak heart, was defying his mother and tilting at the world. It was the first time in his life he had done either, and his mother still could not understand the fury of frustration that had made him do it.

He had been a good boy. Henry had always been a good boy. Mother's very own, first as a child at the hospital when he had lain in danger with rheumatic fever, and then during the months of convalescence. Drinking his warm milk. *Never* forgetting his scarf and galoshes. Keeping clear of the rough boys. And sitting nervously

As he got inside, his feet failed him. He stood and sweated, feeling ludicrous

next to his mother being interviewed for his first job.

All these years he had been so good, so patient, so uncomplaining; so grateful for the little treats his mother planned; so wistfully understanding when she had steered him clear of friendships that might have led him into exertion. Dangerous exertion that could make Henry's heart beat faster until the overstrained pump broke down and Henry would be snuffed out; stopped for ever.

Any life was better than death, and Henry's heart had to be thought about constantly. Like a skilled mechanic, like a mother, she knew what strains could be imposed and what could not. She knew everything about Henry except the part of him that was not a machine. And it was this part that began to whisper that there were more important things than the care and maintenance of the machine.

She had noticed his moodiness and had tried to shake him out of it, but she was not prepared for, she could not grasp, the incredible idea he had conceived. To work in London. When he blurted it out, she thought he was ill; that this was some new unhealthy symptom needing urgent treatment. London with its teeming millions, its buses and tubes, its dangerous tempo.

But the dangers she recited were the ones Henry's sick and stifled soul yearned for. London had exercised an extraordinary fascination for him for as long as he could remember. And the quiet patience he had shown throughout childhood now emerged as an invincible stubbornness that withstood every attack on his ideal.

He had begun answering advertisements for jobs in London, and his mother had retreated into a hurt and baffled silence.

The knowledge of the hurt he was causing her tortured Henry, but it did not deflect him. And at last had come the letter from Rossiter and Peabody, estate agents, Knightsbridge, London, requiring him to attend for interview at nine thirty next Wednesday morning. And here Henry was, in the Tuesday afternoon train to London, exhausted by the long ordeal with his mother, in despair at the thought of the ordeal to come.

His mother's disapproval had sapped his confidence. Oh, what a fool I am, he thought. His mother had known best—she knew him better than anyone in the world. In London, they would laugh at him. He would come running home, sick with relief at being back. He should never have come.

THE journey took three hours. It was nearly eight o'clock and dusk was falling when the train drew in. Henry was in the corridor with his attaché case when it stopped; and a minute later, flowing down the platform with the other passengers in the enormous, racketing vitality of the terminus, he found himself smiling lightheadedly at the unreality of the situation. He was in London!

His mother had insisted that he stay the night with Mrs. Newton, a friend who lived in Wandsworth. He took a bus to Trafalgar Square and crossed the square to wait for another that would take him the rest of the way. Trafalgar Square had seemed a good deal bigger in the pictures, but never so fascinating. He looked about him with lively interest at the throngs of people who strolled about in the failing light. And then, quite suddenly, he saw the Plaza Hotel, and had eyes for nothing else. This was the extraordinary palace of his dreams; in all his visions of London, a glittering place like this had occupied the foreground.

He gazed, fascinated, as a taxi drew up, depositing a party of four evening-dressed men and women outside the hotel. He gazed after them as they went through the revolving doors into the brilliantly lit foyer. It was a warm night, but he shivered a little with vicarious pleasure. They were going to dine, lusciously, with wine and music. He could imagine the scene, the bowing waiters, the enormous menus, the orchestra playing. . . .

He caught his bus and climbed to the top and gave himself up to gazing out at London. But he could not get out of his head the unbelievable world of the Plaza. Who were these gorgeous people? What did they think about? Incredible that the society of novels and films actually existed! But he had seen it; standing waiting for a bus, he had seen it there, beyond the revolving glass doors, real, substantial, utterly unknowable.

He was still thinking about it when the bus put him down at Wandsworth. He alighted and looked about him, and for a moment he was so bewildered and disappointed that he remained rooted to the spot. This surely was not London? He was in a long, sparsely-lit road. A common ran along one side of it, a row of gloomy, three-storey houses on the other.

MRS. NEWTON'S house was down the next side street. As he turned into the street, his spirits sank lower and lower; it was even more sparsely lit, even more subdued than the main road.

Henry's footsteps flagged. They stopped altogether. He stood quite still in the dark street. He hardly dared to think of the mad idea that had come to him; but he knew quite certainly, quite inescapably, what he was going to do. . . .

He had only this one night in London, and he was not going to spend it at Mrs. Newton's. He was going to the Plaza.

Almost without his volition, as though they had a special and wicked purpose of their own, his feet turned abruptly round and walked him to the end of the street. A bus was meandering along to a request stop a hundred yards along the road. Henry ran. His heart set up a shocked and resentful thumping. Henry disregarded it. He jumped on to the bus and sank breathless into a seat.

"The Plaza," he said. His voice came with unexpected crispness from his exertion.

"Yes, me lord," said the conductor.

For a moment as he alighted, his heart failed him. Across the square the Plaza extended a glittering welcome to the lordly ones, to its own kind. Not to him. Oh, my God! he thought as the monstrous palace reared up before him. I can't do it! But again his feet did it for him; up the seven marble steps, past the commissionaire; and then, shaking like an aspen, his eyes wide with fright, he was going through the revolving doors.

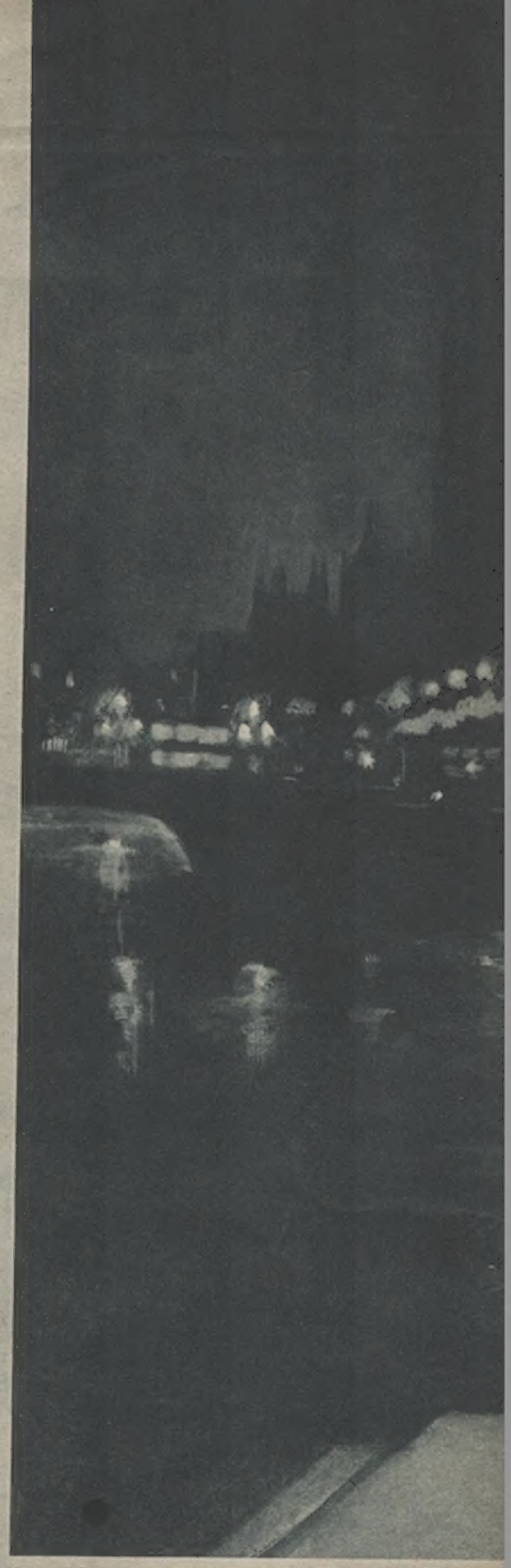
It was only when he was inside, with the expanse of carpet before him like a playing field and every light in the place, it seemed, centring on him, that his feet let him down. He stood and sweated, feeling himself a ludicrous figure with his little attaché case, his belted overcoat and his pork-pie hat. But then he rallied with a desperate bravado. There was a desk marked *Reception*. He made his way to it.

As he reached it, he knew at once from the shrewd, experienced eyes flickering over him and his attaché case that he was going to be refused, and he felt a sudden, joyous relief. But he asked, reluctantly, "You haven't a room for the night?"

Incredibly he heard the man say, "Yes, sir. A single room for one night, is it? That would be four guineas."

"I'll take it," Henry blurted out. He was astounded to hear himself speak. With amazement he saw the man write out a card and give it to him. He slid the attaché case down by his feet to sign the register. A key was placed on the desk, a bell pinged. "This gentleman for room 382."

Magically, he was wafted up to his four-guinea room. He had been clutching a sixpence in his trouser-pocket to give the man who took him up. Intimidated at the last moment, he fumbled for



A cool breeze moved over the Thames. Henry

a larger coin, and saw with dismay as he held it out that it was half a crown. The man nodded civilly and went.

Half a crown for carrying an attaché case! And worth every penny of it, Henry thought, gazing round the room with delight. He tested the bed and opened the cupboards and wardrobe. He looked into the bathroom. He examined himself in the mirror. "Well, you've done it," he said, smiling at the audacity of the man in the mirror. "You've jolly well done it now. Four guineas." His mother would think him demented.

HENRY became suddenly aware that he was ravenously hungry, and opened his case and sat down to eat the sandwiches his mother had given him for the journey. The idea of eating his mother's sandwiches in the Plaza was so comic that he could scarcely eat for laughter. This was putting the Plaza where it belonged!

When he had finished he decided, in his new

barely noticed. He said, "You're very quiet." Valerie answered softly, "This is beautiful. I am sorry I must leave tomorrow without seeing more"

mood of confidence, to take a turn round the hotel.

The heavy silence of the corridor, once he was out of his four-guinea room, intimidated him. He had no idea which way to go. He turned a corner at random, and there was the lift, and a girl stepping into it. Henry followed her.

Quickly, too quickly, he was transported to the swish and bustle of the foyer. The girl got out and walked down a couple of steps to the lounge. Henry followed. But then the girl stopped and spoke to a waiter and sat down at a table, and he was stuck, exposed, left to pick his way through rich, treacherous country alone. He was frightened by the overpowering luxury; the potted palms, the heavy, brocaded furniture.

I don't belong here, he told himself with swiftly mounting hysteria. I don't belong here at all.

"Coffee, sir?" The waiter was at his side.

"Yes," said Henry eagerly, and so loudly that he blushed. But the man had not noticed. He led the way, and it was not until they were there that Henry realized it was the table at which the girl had seated herself.

"If madam does not mind?" the waiter asked her, pulling out a chair for him.

She nodded and Henry sat down, and at once knew the situation was bad and would become worse. Like many shy people, he had the knack of catching people's eyes and being unable to withdraw his own. He must not look at the girl; not a glance, not a flicker.

Henry looked at her. He tried to tear his eyes away at once, for their gaze had crossed; but he knew he was lost. With stupefaction he saw that she was smiling. But not at him, he thought. At someone beyond him. His features moved slowly into a rigid, sickly little smile of their own, a smile he could if necessary turn into a grimace or an abstracted biting of the lip.

"It is so crowded," the girl said. "It is surely very crowded for this time of the year."

There could be no doubt about it. She was talking to him. "It is," Henry said earnestly and a shade too loudly. "It's very crowded indeed. I've never known it so crowded."

"Ah," she said. "You know the place well. It is my first time here."

Henry abandoned the dangerous subject. He sought for something to say. There was something about her accent. . . . He asked quickly, "What part of the country are you from?"

The girl smiled with delight. "But that is very flattering. I am not of England. I am French. You are polite to my accent."

"I'd never have guessed," Henry said, quite genuinely. "I'd never have guessed for a minute." The sincerity in his voice was so obvious that the girl laughed again.

"You are very genteel," she said.

In no time at all they were chatting easily. Henry had scarcely any idea what they talked about. He listened to the conversation as though in a dream, marvelling that this was he; talking to a French girl at the Plaza. Coffee came, and he watched himself gallantly pay for it; and then, in a flash, it seemed, but in actuality after

They stopped outside her door. "I am just a girl you have met," she said. "I am not *the* girl"

an hour, the girl was rising and saying good night and had gone up to her room, and Henry was left smiling after her.

It was only after a few moments that he realized he knew practically nothing about the girl.

SHE had told him her name—Valerie, was it? And that her home was in Paris, and that she was twenty-one. Twenty-one! It suddenly registered that she was four years older than he. But she had not seemed older; she had not looked older. He tried to visualize her face again, but it was gone; maddeningly, he could not remember a single detail.

He began to wonder if he had imagined the whole thing.

And then, with a sudden tingling surprise, half pleasant, half frightening, he knew quite certainly that he had not.

She had forgotten her handbag.

Henry wanted to get up then and go to his own room and undress and go to bed quickly. Enough was enough; it had been a thrilling evening and should now end. He recognized this tingling feeling; he had experienced it in the dark street in Wandsworth; it had sent him marching into the Plaza when his coward's heart urged him to fly to Mrs. Newton's. And now it had him on his feet again, the handbag in his hands.

Enough is enough, Henry said desperately to himself, all the way up in the lift. It was a phrase of his mother's. But his mother was far away; she belonged to another world and another time.

"Room three sixty," he said to the liftman; and in the hush of the corridor, the words still in his ears, he realized he had seen the number on the girl's key as it lay on the table; while he had forgotten so much else about her, he had somehow remembered that.

He found the door and pressed the bell and waited, trembling. When the door opened he could not, for the life of him, get out a word, and held out the bag, dumbly.

The girl's face lit up. "But thank you," she said. "I have searched all over for it. Thank you, thank you."

"That's all right," said Henry. In the girl's smile he saw the familiarity he had managed to achieve, so miraculously, earlier. The knocking of his heart grew faster. He said, "I thought of taking a little walk. I wondered. . . ."

"But that would be delightful," she said at once. "I have seen so little of London and tomorrow I go. Wait just a little minute."

And in a little minute they were going down in the lift, and through the foyer and out into the warm spring night, and for the first time Henry could hear their footsteps.

THE footsteps sounded totally unreal; the big spring moon hung up in the sky was unreal; the fantastic column with its crouched lions in the middle of the square was unreal. But most unreal of all was the figure beside him; the mysterious face, grave, formal in the moonlight, the face of a woman walking with him.

"Where do you go tomorrow?" the girl asked.

"I'm only up for the night. For a business appointment," he added. It sounded so important that he was tempted to qualify it. But he took a quick sideways look at the girl, and she was nodding seriously, and he said instead, "And you? Where are you off to?"

"To America," the girl said. "I fly to New York in the morning."

"America!"

"Yes, to some Americans I met in Paris. I will work for them as nursemaid to their child."

"I see," said Henry heavily. His own escapade seemed suddenly very dull, very trivial.

He walked on moodily with her, down a dark side street to the river. He was silent for so long that he did not know how to start the conversation again, hadn't the spirit to. And then, as though understanding, the girl slipped her arm through his, and instantly the night recovered.

Henry said quietly, "I think you're very brave, flying off to New York."

"Brave?" said the girl. "But it is delightful. I adore new places and new people. Do you not, Henry?"

"I don't know," Henry said. "I've never had much chance of finding out." And then, seeing her quiet interest, quite unable to restrain himself, the whole story came tumbling out.

He had never mentioned his faulty heart before to anyone, and yet here he was, telling it to this girl. His relief was so great that he quite lost his awe of her. He stopped once or twice in that steep, narrow place and took her by the shoulders, saying, "You see what I mean, Valerie?" and "Do you understand me?"

The girl did not interrupt him until he said, "My mother's right, I suppose, really. I'm not like other people. I've got to take extreme care."

IT was then she murmured softly, "No, no. Not extreme care, Henry. Then life is without savour. It is hardly worth living. Just a little more care."

Henry stopped again. "Do you really mean that? Is that what you really think?"

"I cannot tell you what to do. It is your life, no one else's. We have all got to die, Henry. I could not support an existence like that."

Henry hesitated, searching for words. He said, "But my mother——"

"Your mother loves you very much," the girl said quickly. "I am sure of that. But she has tried to shield you from life, because she is afraid. She is afraid of living, and that is so wrong." She looked up at him, gravely. "You must show her that, Henry. You must show her that you are a boy who is not afraid. You must show her that you have enough courage for yourself and for her too. I am sure that in the end she will be happier that way."

Henry said, "You mean I ought to—sort of take charge of things?"

She nodded. "That is right. You must take charge. You will get this job in London, or if not this one you will get another. Then perhaps your mother would come to live with you, if you wish, because she is lonely. But she must live with you, not you with her. Do you see what an important difference that is, Henry?"

"Yes," Henry said slowly. "Yes, I think I do."

They had come out to the river now. In silence they crossed the road and leaned over the coping. A river police launch passed; a cool breeze moved over the water. Henry barely noticed. The girl's words were ringing in his head. She knew all about him now, and yet she considered him quite normal. Just a little more care.

He glanced sideways at her. She was gazing at the dark, dramatic bulk of Parliament, and the pale disc of Big Ben. Her hair was waving slightly in the breeze.

He said, "You're very quiet."

"This is very beautiful. I am sorry I must leave tomorrow without seeing more of it."

"Me too."

After a few minutes, he said, "Shall we walk on a little?"

They walked on. They walked beneath the trees to Waterloo Bridge and crossed the road to the Embankment Gardens. After strolling for a while, they sat down to smoke a cigarette. The girl was silent, and Henry, not wishing to

Continued on page 42

Holidaymakers leave their worries to Inspector James

by JOHN ENNIS

While the pleasure trippers at Southend enjoy the seaside, he keeps an eye on their children, their purses and their lives

WEAVING SLOWLY THROUGH the Bank Holiday crowds last Easter Monday, Harry James, chief foreshore inspector, set out from Southend-on-Sea pier on his daily patrol. He had walked three hundred yards along the promenade when he saw, by the parade of shops across the road, a number of bottles flung into the air. Two of the bottles smashed together and showered broken glass on the heads of the crowd.

Keeping in sight two youths in Edwardian suits, James ran through three lanes of slow-moving cars and pushed through holidaymakers as they surged away from the disturbance. He arrived on the opposite pavement at the same time as a sergeant of Southend police, and together they grabbed the youths.

Three people were cut by the flying glass, but nobody could swear that the two suspects had thrown the bottles. James and the sergeant took their names and addresses, and made them turn out their pockets to prove their identity. Then James had an idea.

"Sniff their hands," he suggested to the sergeant. "See if they smell of beer."

The sergeant sniffed. There was no trace of

On his daily patrol, James shoos children away from a landing stage. He suspects that some parents purposely lose their children for the day

Helped by one of his staff, James gives first-aid to a boy who has cut his knee. Beach cleaners pick up seven thousand bottles a year

At Leigh-on-Sea, James meets a fisherman coming ashore. Part of his job is to enforce the laws which specify the size of fishermen's nets and meshes

beer. They allowed the youths to go. Then an old man approached and told James: "I got a cut from one of those vinegar bottles." Too late, the sergeant realized that the hands had smelt, not of beer, but of vinegar.

James and his staff of eight foreshore inspectors hold police warrants, life-saving certificates and first-aid certificates to fit them for their job of upholding law and order along seven miles of seafront at Southend. James controls 1,400 moorings for privately owned boats. He is responsible for seeing that two hundred licensed pleasure boatmen observe bylaws and keep their boats and safety equipment in good order. He arranges the clearing of wrecks from the Southend foreshore.

He has fifteen men who, starting at 5.30 a.m., clean the beaches daily in time for the morning arrival of the first holidaymakers. In an average year they pick up two thousand tons of litter and seven thousand bottles—"from perfume to pickle, through beer."

James also controls the maintenance and letting of 250 beach huts, and in his spare time collects fishing statistics and enforces the laws on fishing and the size of nets and meshes for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. During the winter he sets four of his inspectors repairing groynes, sea-walls and breakwaters. Two more register and plot moorings, and the other two work through the off-season in other corporation departments.

An intimate knowledge of Southend gained from twenty-seven years as a foreshore inspector often makes James's job easier. Some time ago, a woman told a girl working in a pleasure-boat booking-office that she was looking for a place to stay. The girl sent the woman to her mother's home. Later, the visitor returned and told the girl that her mother needed £2 urgently. After handing over the money, the girl noticed the woman in a boat queue. She sent for James.

When he arrived, the boat, on which a destination indicator said "Sheerness," had sailed with the woman aboard.

James waited patiently for the boat to return. When it arrived, he arrested the woman, who, he discovered later, was wanted on thirty-two counts of false pretences in London. She had not noticed what James already knew—that below the word "Sheerness" on the boat, in much smaller lettering, were the words, "Not landing."

Boatmen Take Him Anywhere

In his job he is often able to ease the way of the people who earn their living on the beach, and they help him in return. If he needs a boat, almost any boatman will take him where he wants to go without question. Before the war, when Southend had two hundred licensed hawkers on the beach, James was once attacked by a man he tried to arrest. He fell backwards into a hole dug by children, and pulled the man down on him. Three of the man's friends leaped on top of them. Beach hawkers dropped their wares and came to James's rescue.

When they dragged the arrested man to his feet, he struggled wildly. A beach escapologist ran up with the ropes from his act. By the time James climbed out of the hole, the beach entertainer had the prisoner tied hand and foot.

James's local knowledge has helped him to save lives, too. Last summer he noticed a rowing-boat going out to sea, inexpertly rowed by two small figures. He knew the boat's owner, and guessed that the boat had been stolen. James got one of the boatmen to take him after the dinghy in a motor-boat.

He found that the oarsmen were two nine-year-old boys. Armed with plastic pistols that they had stolen from a Southend shop, they were making for France. Though he had to take them to a police station, James confesses to a liking for boys of their kind. "They have the adventurous spirit," he says. "Not like so many youngsters who think only of smashing things up."

James finds holidaymakers far better behaved since the war, and his work is consequently less hectic. One job he is pleased to be rid of is dealing with would-be suicides, who often chose Southend for their attempts in prewar days.

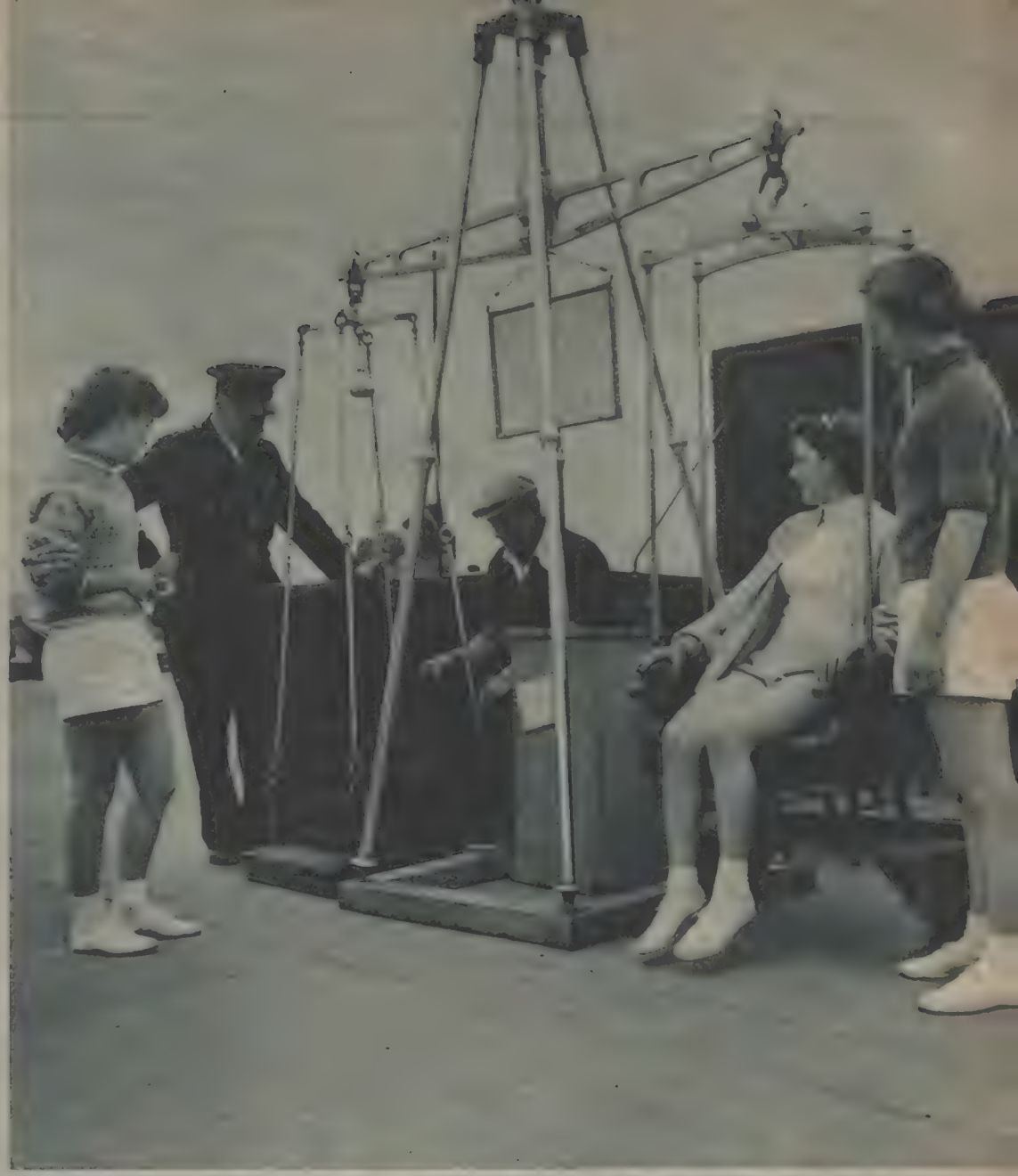
Early one morning, he saw a man, covered with mud, staggering along the beach. "I interrogated him," says James, who was once a policeman and relates incidents in his career as if he was giving evidence, "and discovered that he had tried to commit suicide."

The man had arrived in darkness and, finding the tide out, climbed on to the mile-and-a-quarter long pier. He walked until he saw the glint of water. To make sure that the depth would be right, he walked a little farther, then leaped over the rail of the pier.

He landed in deep mud. He had not reached the sea. The water he saw in the gloom was in the bathing-pool. James put him in hospital. "As far as I know, he is still alive," he says.

Another time, a man was lifted unconscious from the sea by a pleasure-boat. Near him was an abandoned dinghy, and in the dinghy James later found a half-empty gallon jar of beer. The man had drunk the beer to nerve himself for

A home-made boat puts to sea. Last year, James pursued two youngsters who were heading for France in a stolen dinghy



James watches as a holidaymaker is weighed on the front at Southend. Local beach hawkers once went to his rescue when he was attacked by a man he tried to arrest

his suicide attempt. Stupefied, he had floated for about twenty minutes without drowning. When James questioned him he was still drunk.

James says he enjoys his job because of its variety. On a typical day recently he arrived at his office to be told that a loaded sailing barge had dragged its anchor and had been blown ashore. He went out and found the boat lying across a breakwater. He assessed the damage to the breakwater, then returned to his office to telephone the owners of the boat and find what arrangements they were making to take it away.

He gave his inspectors their instructions for the day, then wrote his comments on three applications to the corporation's Pier and Foreshore Committee for boatmen's licences.

His correspondence contained applications for boat moorings, and requests for beach-huts later in the summer. A schoolmaster wanted to know the times of the tides on a day when he intended taking fifty boys for an outing to Southend.

Visitors Are Blind To Danger

Later, James chose a crowded section of the seafront to patrol. He watched the pleasure-boats to make sure that none was overloading, and to see that boatmen from inferior pitches were not poaching on better pitches while their tenants were out at sea.

Back in his office, he heard that a bather was in difficulties. He rushed to the spot to find that the bather had been rescued by a man who, like many rescuers in James's experience, refused to give his name. James arranged for the man to dry his clothes.

James cannot understand the blindness to danger shown by many holidaymakers. Not long ago, a pleasure-boat skipper brought in a boy he had found two miles out at sea, happily paddling a rubber dinghy. "He could never have paddled back against the tides," says James.

People who dive from breakwaters without first finding the depth of the water also puzzle him. One day he was called out to a man who had broken his neck by diving off a jetty into shallow water. James sent the man to hospital, then tried to console his wife and two boys. He found that the man had brought his family to Southend for the day to celebrate getting a new job.

"While the woman and her children were telling me what a wonderful husband and father he was, my phone rang. It was the hospital, with the news that the man had died."

Most of the two hundred children lost in Southend each year are returned to their parents by James and his inspectors, who boast that they have handed back every lost child before the end of the day.

James was once called to a man who had lost his child while his wife was shopping. The man had slipped into a public house for a quick drink and found the child gone when he came out. While he was giving James the child's description, his wife returned. "She beat the daylight out of him," says James. "I can see him now, with his back against a fence and tears in his eyes as his wife slapped his face."

Occasionally, James has suspected that a few unworthy parents lose their children on purpose, confident that they will be found and looked after while Mother and Father have a trouble-free day. No such motive could be attached to the mother who arrived three years ago for a day out with her three children in Southend.

She lost one child at 9 a.m., soon after she arrived. She reported her loss to James, then spent the morning searching independently. At midday an inspector found the stray on the front. While the mother was collecting the child from James's office, one of the others disappeared. Through the afternoon she and the inspectors searched, but before the second child was found, she lost the third. "We managed to restore them both at 9.30 p.m.," says James. "But by that time the poor woman was nearly demented."

Woman Had Lost Her Savings

James finds that trippers are almost as careless with their property as with their children. Last summer a small girl brought him a handbag that she had found. It contained £375. A few minutes later a weeping woman knocked at his door to report the loss of the handbag. She had hung it on a rail while she fastened her shoe. The money was intended as a deposit on a house that she was about to buy. She gave £5 reward to the child who had brought in the bag.

On another occasion a woman of seventy-eight, in Southend to give her grandson a day by the sea, lost her purse. All her money and her return tickets were gone. James told her to wait in his office, buttoned his tunic, put on his peaked cap, and went out.

He walked along the foreshore, collecting pennies from all his acquaintances among the boatmen and coach drivers there. "I gathered enough to give her the fares back to London," says James, "and there was enough over to give her grandchild a fair day's outing." THE END

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE HANLEY

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BORN ON SNOWSHOES (2) by Evelyn Berglund Shore

A howling wolf pack besieges our cabin

I screamed, and Mom told me to keep quiet. "Fire a shot, quick," she said. "If you make a noise as though you were half dead, those wolves will be in here to finish the job"

I WAS TWELVE WHEN my father was crippled with arthritis and had to retire to hospital. I never saw him again. Mother, my two sisters—Hazel, aged thirteen, and Elsie, nine—and I were left to fend for ourselves, and we decided to carry on with Father's work, trapping for furs about two hundred miles up the Salmon River in the Alaskan Arctic.

For twelve years we were to run the traplines, with the help of our sixty-year-old trapper friend, John Roberts. The routine never varied. The season would start in June when we left Fort Yukon, our boats piled high with stores and ammunition. Usually we arrived at our home cabin on the Salmon River about the middle of August, when the berry season was in full swing, and the last two weeks of the month we spent picking berries and fishing.

By September 1, when the hunting season opened, the grass was dry enough to cut and store for winter bedding for our dog teams. It took us two days to cut enough for the winter.

We would cut from nine in the morning till about two, when we would gather the grass into large bunches and tie each bunch round the middle with a piece of rope and throw it into the boat. By the time the boat was loaded, it was a mountain of dry, light-brown grass. As soon as we got it home, we made each dog a soft bed and put the rest of the grass away for the winter.

Then hunting, a hard three weeks of it, to get enough moose, caribou and bear to last us through the winter. Generally we hunted upriver in the pole boat. I got my first moose when I was twelve, though I never thought that I deserved the credit for it. Elsie and John and I were hunting in the rain. As we came out of the dripping brush, John stopped and whispered: "Keep still! There's a moose coming over there."

I looked, but couldn't see anything. Then, as John raised his rifle, I looked where the gun pointed and saw the head and horns of a bull

Evelyn with two of her own team. While she was freeing one of her dogs caught in a trap, he set his teeth on her arm—and didn't bruise her

The daring life of Britain's leading supersonic test pilot

AGAINST THE SUN

BY EDWARD LANCHBERY

Beamont at home with his wife and family

WHEN Roland Beamont was flying Britain's still secret P.1 fighter on a sound-barrier-breaking flight over Lancashire, a little girl heard the bang and asked: "What's that?"

"That's Daddy," said Beamont's young wife, Pat, and hurried home to hear how the test flight had gone.

At seventeen, Beamont joined the R.A.F. He flew Hurricanes in the Battle of Britain, tamed the untried Typhoon fighter and duelled with flying bombs. . . .

"Beamont's thumb tightened on the firing button. . . . The sky was red and black. He ducked at the sheet of flame. The Tempest bucked, one wing went down and he felt the scorching heat. He was in the core of a volcano. A moment later the darkness passed —he had flown through the explosion of the flying bomb and come out, upside-down, on the other side."

Awarded the D.S.O. and the D.F.C., Beamont became a peacetime test pilot. One of his first assignments was with the revolutionary Canberra jet bomber. It was not only by the aircraft's spectacular performance that he stole the show at the Farnborough air display. . . .

"The roar of the jet subsided in a howl of slipstream. The Canberra seemed to stop dead in mid-air; almost as quickly the excitement of the crowd gave place to a numbing horror as they saw fragments come away from the aircraft and fall to earth."

It was in a Canberra that Beamont made his record-breaking two-way crossing of the Atlantic. Soon afterwards he was challenging the realms of supersonic flight in the P.1.

Against The Sun is the story of a quiet man who races with time itself, a professional man of speed whose hobbies are bird-watching and fishing. It is also the story of his marriage and of Pat, his wife, who learned to share her husband's enthusiasm for the machines in which he risks his life. It begins . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

about a hundred yards away. I raised my own .30-40 Krag rifle, but I was so short that I couldn't see well over the brush. John shot and the moose turned his head. I knew he would start running any second and so I shot, too. To my amazement the moose went down.

John cried: "You got him!" We heard the brush crashing, and he added: "Come on, he's down. We don't want him to get up again." When we went over, the moose raised his head. John said: "Finish him, he's your moose."

"You shoot him," I said. "I can't see him well from here."

"Step up closer then."

But I said: "You shoot him. I might only scare him and he might get up and run away."

So John shot.

When we skinned the moose, we found where John's first bullet had hit—just behind the ribs. My shot had hit the head just under the eye, too low to be a killing shot. John always said I killed that moose. I killed plenty of them later, but I never thought that one was mine.

Beyond The Arctic Circle

Usually we hunted for about three weeks until the moose were thin from rutting and the ice began to form in the river. In late September, the hills were a maze of red and yellow birch leaves, mingled with the dark green of spruce.

We hunted from the hills, watching from above to spot moose or caribou. Sometimes we went as far as the boundary of Yukon Territory, a wide slash through the timber, continuing north beyond the Arctic Circle.

Sometimes we had bear troubles. One afternoon we met a moose on the trail and I shot him. We cut up the carcass and went back to camp, to return early next morning for our meat. One ham was missing. We found it on the other side of a log where a bear had dropped it getting away. On our first trip out with packs of meat we carried Hazel's .30-06 rifle, but a ten-pound gun gets heavy. The next trip we left it by the meat. As John said, if we were going to see Mr. Bear we would see him at that point. He knew where the meat was.

Black Bear Was Stalking Us

As we came out into the place where we had left the first load, we stopped to rest. Suddenly Hazel said: "Hey! There's that darned bear again!" A black bear was standing on his hind legs looking at us, one paw resting on a dry spruce pole. As we moved, he dropped down out of sight in the brush.

John said: "You'll never see *him* again," and settled back against his pack of meat. But as I stood watching to see where the prowler went, I saw the brush move, and there was Mr. Bear, much closer than before.

"He's coming nearer," I said.

Hazel picked up a piece of rotten wood and threw it. The bear went over to where it landed, sniffed at it and then made a half circle round us. "Shall I go for the rifle?" Hazel asked.

John looked at the bear and then to where the rifle was, two hundred yards away. "I guess you had better," he said. "It looks like he won't go away."

When Hazel started, the bear watched her. Then he crouched down behind the brush. I could not see him, but I could hear him walking. Stepping round a big, upturned root to search for him, I looked right into his face. He was sneaking up on us from behind the root, and he was only twenty-five feet away. As we faced each other, he puffed his lips out and made a blowing noise, went round the other side of the root and circled nearer, blowing as he worked closer with each circle.

Finally Hazel came up with the rifle. She had run both ways, and was so out of breath that she handed the gun to John. John fired at a black spot where the bear was half hidden in the willows, and we heard the branches crashing. John swore and passed Hazel the rifle. "We won't see him again," he said for the second time.

But right then the bear came into sight in an opening. This time his ears were back, his teeth were bared, and he was loping straight towards us. Hazel had reloaded her rifle the moment she got it. She fired. The bear turned at right angles and kept going. She fired twice more and he fell.

As the days passed, the ice would start to form heavily. The boat poles were caked with it. Though the sun shone all day, the shore ice never thawed. The slush in the main stream ran until almost noon. Those were the signs that hunting was over: freezing river and rutting moose. Unless the hunting had been particularly bad, and the caches were not full enough to carry us through, we put away our rifles for a while and turned wood choppers.

Every autumn we had to cut about a thousand cubic feet of wood. In the timber about half a mile from the cabin, Hazel and John felled the trees and Mom and I partially limbed them and cut them into sixteen-foot lengths. Elsie trimmed all she could while we sawed, and when the felling and cutting were done, Mom and Elsie finished trimming while John, Hazel and I worked the logs out to the wood road and piled them for loading on the sleds. As soon as there was snow, we loaded and hauled them up to the cabin.

Then there were toboggans to make or repair, dog harness to patch up or replace, traps to get ready, a hundred and one things to do before the trapping season. Our whole life was a preparation for the winters. There were supplies to be sorted out and got ready, camp stoves to make out of sheet iron.

Set Traps When Snow Fell

All the preparations that started with the buying of supplies in Fort Yukon early in the summer came to a head about November 1 when we set out the traplines. By that time the creek was frozen over, and we generally had four or five inches of snow.

Putting out lines in the autumn was the hardest work of all the trapping season. That was when we set out camps and traps, cut new trails and cleared old ones, and killed meat for the out-cabins.

The first winter when we went out alone with John, after Dad went into the hospital, there was an unusually large amount of work to be done, new trails to be cut and an out-cabin to be built. We went with John to set out the lines while Elsie stayed home with Mom to do what they could round the home cabin.

Fried Moose Meat For Tea

John's team had four dogs, Hazel's and mine three each. Because we had to carry supplies for a month, our loads were very heavy. Hazel and I had a terrible time trying to make our dogs keep up with John's. It took us a week to reach the place where John intended to build a cabin. But before we started building, John said we had to have a moose.

He and Hazel left me in the tent while they went hunting each day. Just before dark, when they should be coming back, I would fry some of the moose meat we had brought from home, warm up a pot of brown beans, make some tea and bake biscuits.

One day Hazel and John did not come at the usual time. I cooked the supper and waited while it grew darker. At six o'clock I fed the dogs. By this time it was pitch dark. I went back into the tent and blew out the candle so that my eyes would get accustomed to the darkness and I could see farther by the light of the stars. The moon would not be up until later.

I felt little and cold and scared, standing out in front of the tent in the thin snow, straining my ears in the quiet for any sound that would let me know they were coming. The Northern Lights began to weave across the sky like pale red and green silk in a wind, forming on one

Hazel and Elsie (right) stock an outlying camp. Preparing for the winter snow, the girls hunted moose, blazed fresh trails and felled trees

horizon and rising, growing big and bright across the sky and then fading out as they disappeared behind the dark hill at the back of the tent.

I stood kicking my feet together, waiting and watching the lights, until one of the dogs gave a little bark and stood up and bristled, and I heard John say: "Keep still, boys," and they were back. They had spots of bloody snow on their trouser legs and moccasins—a moose, they said, a big one.

With the meat problem taken care of, we could start the real work. Building a cache and hauling the meat to it took two days. Then there were two weeks of cutting trails, which had to be marked before the snow got any deeper.

By the time we could start work on the out-cabin, the snow was nine inches deep. While John and Hazel felled trees and laid the first round of the cabin, I took a shovel over to the foot of the hill, cleared off the snow, and dug out the brown moss for filling the chinks. It had to be thawed in the tent before it could be used.

John notched the ends of the logs, dovetailing them where the wall joined at right angles until the crack was a quarter of an inch between each log. Then Hazel and I covered the lower log with moss and turned the top log over on it. One after another, logs were notched, mossed and rolled into place and the walls went up.

Then came the roof. Two logs were laid lengthwise across the top of the walls, about three feet apart, and a short log notched into place across each end. Another log was laid across these short logs, parallel to the first two, to form a ridge. Small poles were laid from the ridge to the tops of the walls, and these we covered with a mat of moss six inches deep. Finally, we chopped eight or ten inches through the frozen ground to find mud to smear over the moss. When the mud was on, the house was finished.

A little out-cabin like this had no windows. The door was a caribou skin with the hair on, tacked over a pole frame and hinged with rawhide. The table was a pole bench eighteen inches wide along one wall. The bunk, also of poles, was across the back of the cabin. It took up more than a third of the house. Under it was piled firewood.

Built Cabin In Eight Days

The camp stove was in the corner, opposite the table. Green spruce boughs padded the floor and the bunk, and there were nails driven into the walls and ridgepoles to hang clothes on to dry them out. That was all there was to the cabin; the whole project took about eight days.

Then there were the dog shelters which we built out of the boughs and tops of the felled trees. In each we made a bed of boughs. That took two more days. Our month was up, with not a trap out yet and no tents set up beyond the cabin or on the sidelines. John said it would be a waste of time to go home without setting our traps, and so for three weeks we were out on the trails we had cut earlier, putting up the tents and setting out sidelines.

We set various kinds and sizes of traps and in different ways for different animals. Wolf, fox and wolverine were trapped pretty much alike, and so were marten, mink and ermine. We had plenty of home uses for other kinds of skins—rabbit skin for lining mittens, caribou hides for cabin doors, untanned caribou hide strips for mending dog harness and putting tread into snowshoes, caribou or bear skins for mattresses—but the first six were the furs that meant cash.

For wolf, fox and wolverine we used to trail-set a good deal. First we cut off a tree about four feet from the ground and slipped the chain of the trap over the stump. Then we stood the rest of the tree against the stump to hide the fresh cutting, and set the trap in the trail—preferably at a place where anything coming along would have to step over a down pole and into the trap.

Marten, mink and ermine we trapped differently. Marten are found mostly in hills that are heavily timbered with small spruce. They have certain places that they travel along time and again. The best spot to set a trap was right near the bottom of a steep gully, and the next best was at the top of a ridge.

Where we saw tracks, we set a trap. Because they have to see what everything is, marten

Continued on page 29

The goat had led them into this—the goat and that old lunatic Dallu. Enemy tribesmen were everywhere, and still he had to go hunting! Now all their lives were in danger

CROSSFIRE

by JOHN MASTERS

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

YOUNG TOMMY THORNDYKE was a keen type, if not over bright, and as this was practically his first day on the Frontier, and he had distinctly heard a couple of shots fired in anger, he thought perhaps he was going to get a medal.

The year was 1937, the Frontier was the North West Frontier of India, and Tommy was a new-hatched second-lieutenant of the 13th Gurkha Rifles.

The shots had been fired by a tribesman—a Mahsud—and they had killed the battalion's oldest and best loved *bhisti*, a water-carrier. Tommy was very angry and he thought the other members of the patrol were; but he was mistaken. The others—Subahdar Dallu, Lance-Naik Puransing, and Rifleman Ranbahadur—were Gurkhas, and they had other things on their minds. They didn't tell their young officer; they let him learn the hard way. . . .

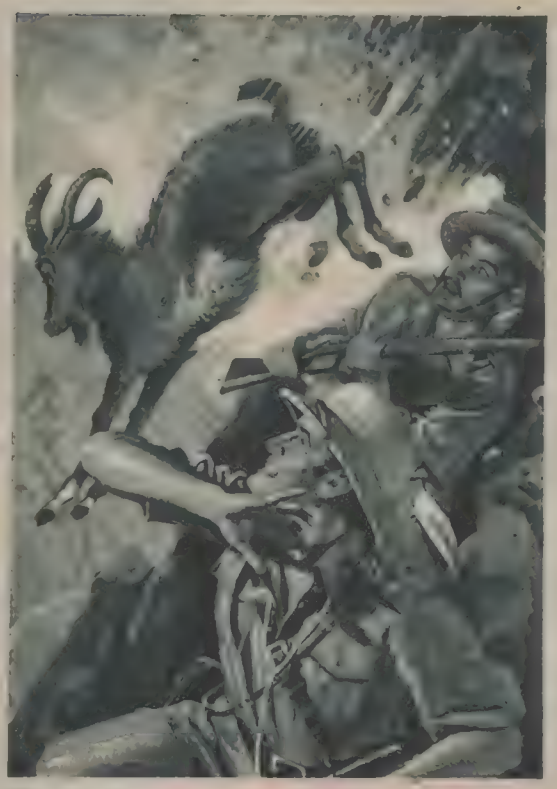
The colonel had sent Tommy and the others out to join A Company, which was in position on a ridge, shaped like a crouching lion, some distance above the road. A Company's stone-walled fortress was up near the lion's head. Tommy's party was somewhere on the lion's left big toe. Tommy had lost his compass the day before, and he had little idea of the route. The main body of the column was somewhere behind, A Company was somewhere in front and higher up, and all around (he liked to think) were Mahsuds waiting to pounce on him. Tommy was therefore keyed up to a high pitch of nervous intensity. He wanted to do his job, he wanted to get a medal.

The outlook of the three Gurkhas with him was rather different. First, they had all heard that an old mountain goat, an *oorial*, had been seen on the ridge. They had volunteered for the patrol because they hoped to get a shot at it: they were regulars, and they wouldn't have volunteered for anything for any other reason. Second, they knew that Tommy was the commander; but they had no intention of taking any notice of him. Subahdar Dallu had twenty-five years' service. If anything went wrong, he would get the blame.

They also knew that Dallu was leading them all over the hill in the hope of spotting the *oorial*. And finally, as they were professionals, they knew that there were Mahsuds on the hill. Their rifles were loaded and cocked and they carried them held across their bodies with bayonets fixed, for the hill was covered with holly oak scrub and thorn bushes.

At a bend in the faintly marked track, Puransing, who was in the lead, checked his step and crouched quickly. Dallu darted up and knelt on one knee beside him. His waxed moustaches stuck out on either side of his mouth. Now they quivered and the tips of his ears twitched. He pulled down a twig of thorn, and stood on tip-toe—he was 5 ft. 0½ in.—to see over it.

Tommy lifted the field glasses slung round



The goat's sharp hooves whizzed close by as it bounded over their heads. Subahdar Dallu swung up with the rifle, but he was too late

his neck by a short strap, and quartered the scrub-covered slope slanting up in front. They must have seen traces of the enemy. He wished they would tell him what was happening, but as his Gurkhali was poor it was no use asking them. His blood tingled and he wished he was safe with A Company—but with a medal.

Dallu exclaimed sharply under his breath, shaded his eyes with his hand and stared half right up the hillside. Among the scattered bushes and tumbled stones four hundred yards away, something was moving, slowly—something browny-grey and quite close to the ground.

TOMMY'S stomach felt weak and empty again, and he looked harder, trying to keep the binoculars steady. Then he picked it up—a goat with heavy curved horns, the left one broken, cropping at the coarse brown grass and tugging at the thorn bushes. With relief, he let the glasses drop to his chest and whispered, "Come on, Subahdar sahib. It's only a goat."

The others did not move. Dallu's eyes fairly sparkled, and he said in a hoarse whisper, "Sahib, it is an *oorial*!"

The Gurkhas held a conference in Gurkhali too rapid for Tommy to catch. He said again, "Come on. We must get to A Company."

Subahdar Dallu turned to him with a chiding look. He was a little cock-sparrow of a man, slight and hard and rather pompous-seeming. Under the wide-brimmed hat his cannonball head was all but bald. He was pale brown in colour, and always had a high spot of red prominent on each cheek bone. He said, "We—shoot —*oorial*. After . . . A Company."

Tommy was horrified. The colonel had sent them to join A Company, and here was Dallu proposing to chase a wild goat.

He said flatly, "No!"

Now for the first time he began to think—about Dallu's rifle, for instance. Subahdars carried pistols, not rifles. Dallu had always intended to stalk the goat. . . . Tommy hadn't been with his regiment for long, but long enough to know that with Gurkhas hunting was a passion, a religion.

The subahdar, the lance-naik, and the rifleman were looking at him with contempt almost visible in their faces. He wanted to be popular. He changed his mind and said, "All right."

Beaming, Dallu sprang to action. He told the other two Gurkhas to stay where they were for fifteen minutes, and then to walk slowly on across the slope. He beckoned to Tommy to accompany him up the hill, and explained by gestures that when they had got higher they would move along under the crest, and lie down. A light wind was blowing straight up the ridge from the south-east. The goat would be disturbed by Puransing and Ranbahadur, whose scent and sound would be wafted up to it, and probably trot towards the ridge crest and past Dallu for a fairly easy shot.

At the subahdar's heels Tommy worked quickly up among the bushes. For ten minutes they moved very fast, nearly straight up the slope towards the spine of the ridge. Tommy found he had to use his hands most of the way —the ridge became very steep. Thorns scratched him, and he found it hard to fill his lungs properly. The sun caught him full in the back; it was already about eighty-five degrees on this May morning in the lowland hills at three thousand feet above sea level. It would be a hundred or more by mid-afternoon.

Tommy's legs ached and his breath came in great gasps. Dallu breathed evenly, his shoulders back as if he was on parade, and the bunched muscles of his compact thighs and calves drove him effortlessly along over the rocks and boulders. It was fifteen minutes in all before Tommy could at last drop to one knee, panting, beside the subahdar. His chest felt sharp and his eyes hurt.

Beneath them lay a hundred yards of hillside devoid of scrub and greenery, and steep, with huge smooth slabs of tilted granite. Beyond the slabs the slope eased off.

Dallu sat in the lee of a holly bush and waited. In the silence Tommy heard a faint

Continued on page 44

Tommy found himself running, and shouting, "Charge!" in a cracked voice. He fired and fired till his pistol was empty

Harry Hopman, the fox behind Australian tennis

by DON EVERITT

From the sidelines, he plots tactics which turn schoolboys into world-beaters. Twenty years ago, he failed to become a great player; now his ruthless coaching gives others the chance

IN THE DRESSING-ROOM, Harry Hopman, the non-playing Australian tennis captain, railed at the diminutive Adrian Quist. He criticized his tactics and his technique. He gave him no peace. It was the first week in September, 1939, and Quist and John Bromwich had just lost their opening singles matches in the Davis Cup final against the United States. No team had ever fought back to win from this position. When the Australian pair won the doubles the next day, Hopman still lashed Quist.

"You're playing like a melon-head," he snapped.

"Yes, Hop," the little man said.

Quist played his next singles with an unrelenting fury. He ran Riggs, the nimble American champion, off his feet. Bromwich clinched the match by beating Parker in straight sets. Hopman had led Australia to their first victory since 1919.

Years later, he met a friend who had watched that final in September, 1939.

"Remember that wild week, Harry, when the war began?" the friend said.

"The war?" said Hopman. "Oh, you mean the week I had such a hell of a time with Quist."

Schemed For His Success

The game is everything to Henry Christian Hopman, who, though touching forty-nine, still captains and manages Australia's globe-trotting tennis team. From the sidelines, his lean and short brown frame today dominates the world's championship courts, overshadowing all the male players of the last decade. The greatness which eluded him as a player has come to him as a mentor, twenty years later. But then, Hopman has always schemed to get his way with formidable patience.

He did not return at once to the Davis Cup arena after the war. Australia's ageing prewar talent lost the trophy to the United States in 1946, and challenged for it unsuccessfully in 1947, 1948 and 1949. Hopman, meanwhile, quietly nurtured two or three promising youngsters in Melbourne, Australia. It was said that he could have had the Davis Cup captaincy in any of those postwar years.

He did accept it in 1950, when the selection committee also picked his protégés, Frank Sedgman and Ken McGregor. In the first singles match, Hopman produced a tactical and risky surprise. He replaced the gentle guile of the veteran, John Bromwich, with McGregor's rush and smash. McGregor, and Australia, won.

Hopman, Sedgman and McGregor held the

In spite of whispered advice from Hopman, Lew Hoad, the young Australian player, lost to Tony Trabert of America in the Davis Cup last year

To enforce discipline, Hopman takes notes of bad behaviour in his team and fines offenders

Ken Rosewall and Hopman smile happily after a victory. When Rosewall and Hoad won the Davis Cup in 1953, Trabert, one of the beaten Americans, said : "We were beaten by two babes and a fox"

trophy in 1951 and 1952, then the protégés turned professional. Hopman had two more ready. But Ken Rosewall and Lew Hoad needed very careful handling. At nineteen, they lacked experience, and in a world championship event their precocity might suddenly desert them. Hopman's success as a captain depends to some extent on the tactical responsibility he can take off his team's shoulders. In December, 1953, with his two young colleagues, he excelled himself.

The Australians and the American challengers reached the final match all square. Rosewall then met Vic Seixas. Each took a set. As they changed ends at a critical stage in the third set, Hopman, sitting alone and as inscrutable as ever at the sidelines, whispered to Rosewall to start rushing the net after his service. The stratagem worked. Seixas, a net-rushing player himself, cracked as Rosewall, then primarily a baseline player, challenged him at his own game.

In a short speech after the Australians had received the Davis Cup, Tony Trabert, one of the defeated Americans, said to the crowd: "We were beaten by two babes and a fox." Hopman has never received a more apt description.

Critics have given him a variety of names in the last five years: the Little General, the Tennis Svengali, the producer of magnificent robots, the man with the whip. Hopman, though sometimes a little hurt, weathers it all.

He has become a butt for sports writers for several reasons: he expects his teams to be as single-minded as he is himself; he will not allow his players to talk to most newspapermen; and he has some curious, though effective, methods of keeping discipline.

On the world tour of the major tennis tournaments which the Davis Cup team makes from May to September every year, Hopman supervizes their tennis, eating, sleeping, travelling, entertainment, clothing and manners. "It's not a pleasure trip. We're out to win what we can and give the boys experience for the Davis Cup. It entails a lot of hard work."

Hopman does not allow the players to waste too much energy on morning shopping expeditions and sightseeing. If they want to see a film show, as they very often do, they have to go before dinner. Back in their hotel suite, they change into pyjamas and dressing-gowns before eating. "I keep them off things like ravioli, lobster and oysters. They have a good piece of meat and a light sweet." Then they watch television, write letters, or read. They go to bed about eleven.

Hopman regards the players as Australia's ambassadors and he expects them to act accordingly. "You can't let high-spirited boys of seventeen to twenty-three do just as they like."

To enforce his discipline, he operates a system of fines, carefully noting them in a little black book. The fines come out of each player's personal expenses allowance of 25s. a day. Hopman uses the money to pay for communal luxuries, such as hired television sets in their hotel rooms.

On the tennis court, Hopman fines the players for displays of temperament. "If a boy gives way to his feelings, he has not complete control of himself." When a line judge gave a questionable decision in one match, one of his players dropped his racket and threw the game away in disgust. "He had a big fine: five shillings."

A 5s. fine follows automatically if one of Hopman's players talks to a journalist. This offence also breaks a clause in the agreement which each player signs with the Lawn Tennis Association of Australia.

Accused Of Harsh Methods

Hopman, a newspaper sports writer himself, demands this clause because, he says, newspapers have misquoted his players badly in the past and caused unpleasantness among his teams. Now the sports writers accuse him of chain gang methods.

"If Harry treated his boys the way the papers imply," says Boyne Bullock, one of Hopman's friends in London, "they would not be as happy and friendly off the court as I know them to be." Hal Maughan, an Australian business associate of Hopman who now lives in London, says: "I know that the boys' parents are perfectly happy to allow their sons to go round the world with Harry." Hopman himself says: "The boys have a good life. I can never arrange enough tennis on tour to satisfy them. They would fly across Europe overnight for a match. They *like* to play and they *like* to win."

Contrary to a popular belief arising from Hopman's against-the-odds Davis Cup wins, he has no secret formulae. He has great tactical ability. Otherwise, his success comes from handpicking leading schoolboy players, never raw novices, and putting them through a tough conditioning course. When they think that they are as fit as can be, he drives them harder.

Hopman interferes little with the tennis styles of his team. When he takes them on the court in training he fires a dozen balls at them from all angles, not to improve their strokes but to sharpen their reflexes. When a player has a technical fault, Hopman methodically diagnoses and treats it.

Fanatically Keen On Sport

A fanatical sportsman, Hopman has little to distract him from tennis. He does not smoke, drinks very little, does not cultivate a garden, has no children, and has a wife who is as keen on tennis as he is. (Mrs. Hopman, who tours with her husband, is now emulating him by helping to build a team of Australian women players.)

The one thing that does worry Hopman is his extended leave of absence from his newspaper every year. "I have to drop my column. I cannot write on sport as Davis Cup captain."

"Harry," says Hal Maughan, "is the most single-minded fellow I know. If he sets himself an aim, nothing and no one will stop him." This dominating trait has been with Hopman since boyhood. At a Sydney high school, a master once told him: "You're wasting your time on tennis. It might be different if you had a chance of getting somewhere, but you know you haven't. You're jeopardizing your future and later you'll realize what a fool you've been."

Hopman persevered and confounded the teacher by reaching Davis Cup class as a player. But other men always overshadowed him. Only as non-playing captain has he at last got somewhere: five times, on behalf of the team, he has personally received the Davis Cup.

The Australian team's downfall against the Americans last December, Hopman regards as only temporary. Alongside their major opponents, his players have age on their side and have yet to reach their peak.

Besides, one vital member of the team is said to have got over the trouble which put him off form last year. It is the one complaint which Hopman cannot control: love. THE END

Hickory Dickory Dock

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

Celia had stumbled on a mystery about someone at the hostel. Was that why she had been murdered?

IT HAD STARTED with a series of thefts at the students' hostel in Hickory Road—a trivial case for Hercule Poirot to concern himself with. But now it was no longer trivial. Now it was a case of murder. . . . Poirot's secretary, Miss Lemon, had asked him to look into the thefts: they were worrying her sister, Mrs. Hubbard. The hostel was owned by a temperamental foreign woman, Mrs. Nicoletis, but Mrs. Hubbard, the matron, was responsible for running the place.

Poirot found that the stolen articles fell into two classes: small luxuries that a girl might find tempting, and things like boracic powder and electric light bulbs, that it was hard to believe anyone would steal. Was there a link between these thefts and the malicious slashing of one of the students' rucksacks, the destruction of another's carefully written notes?

It had seemed that there were the "prints" of at least two people here—and when Celia Austin, a dispenser at St. Catherine's Hospital, shamefacedly confessed to those thefts that he placed in the first category, Poirot had a hunch that things were by no means over.

The next day Celia became engaged to a young psychology student, Colin McNabb—confirmation of Poirot's theory that her stealing had been planned merely to attract McNabb's interest. And the day after that, she was found dead from morphia poisoning. Poirot's hunch had been right.

It had looked like suicide at first. But the local police, headed by Inspector Sharpe, soon realized that they had to hunt for a killer.

Methodically, Sharpe began to interview everyone at the hostel. His inquiries were not long in bearing fruit: a few weeks before, he learned, a young student named Nigel Chapman had won a bet by obtaining without a prescription three different types of drugs on the poison list. And one of the phials had contained morphia. . . .

Nigel, looking unusually haggard, claimed that the poisons had been destroyed after he had won his bet. "I'd no reason on earth for putting that girl out of the way, Inspector," he said. "I didn't do it."

PART FOUR

Mrs. Nicoletis's Secret

THE story of the bet and the disposal of the poison was confirmed by Len Bateson and by Colin McNabb. Sharpe retained Colin McNabb after Len and Nigel had gone. As soon as they were alone he said: "I don't want to cause you more pain that I can help, Mr. McNabb. I can realize what it means to you for your fiancée to have been poisoned on the very night of your engagement."

"There'll be no need to go into that aspect of it," said Colin McNabb, his face immovable. "You'll not need to concern yourself with my feelings. Just ask me any questions you like which you think may be useful to you."

"It was your considered opinion that Celia Austin's behaviour had a psychological origin?"

"There's no doubt about it at all," said Colin McNabb. "If you'd like me to go into the theory of the thing——"

"No, no," said Inspector Sharpe, hastily. "I'm taking your word for it as a student of psychology."

"Her childhood had been a particularly unfortunate one. It had set up an emotional block——"

"Quite so, quite so." Inspector Sharpe was desperately anxious to avoid hearing the story of yet another unhappy childhood. Nigel's had been quite enough.

"You had been attracted to her for some time?"

"I would not say precisely that," said Colin, considering the matter conscientiously. "Subconsciously, no doubt, I had been attracted, but I was not aware of the fact. Since it was not my intention to marry young, I had no doubt set up a considerable resistance to the idea in my conscious mind."

"Yes. Just so. Celia Austin was happy in her engagement to you? I mean, she expressed no doubts? Uncertainties? There was nothing she felt she ought to tell you?"

"She made a very full confession of all she'd been doing. There was nothing more in her mind to worry her."

"And you were planning to get married—when?"

"Not for a considerable time," said Colin. "I'm not in a position, at the moment, to support a wife."

"Had Celia any enemy here? Anyone who did not like her?"

"I can hardly believe so. I've given that point of view a great deal of thought, Inspector. Celia was well liked here. I'd say, myself, it was not a personal matter at all which brought about her end."

"What do you mean by 'not a personal matter'?"

"I do not wish to be very precise at the moment. It's only a vague kind of idea I have and I'm not clear about it myself."

From that position the inspector could not budge him.

The last two students to be interviewed were Sally Finch and Elizabeth Johnston. The inspector took Sally Finch first.

She was frightened and uneasy, but the brandy

Sally was an attractive girl with a mop of red hair and eyes that were bright and intelligent. After routine questions and answers, she suddenly took the initiative.

"D'you know what I'd like to do, Inspector? I'd like to tell you just what I think. I, personally. There's something all wrong about this house, something very wrong indeed. I'm sure of that."

"You mean because Celia Austin was poisoned?"

"No. I mean before that. I've been feeling it for some time. I didn't like the things that were going on here. I didn't like that rucksack which was slashed about and I didn't like Valerie's scarf being cut to pieces. I didn't like

ived her spirits. And then a voice spoke behind her: "Why, Mrs. Nick, I didn't know this was a haunt of yours." She swung round violently

Black Bess's notes being covered with ink. I was going to get out of here and get out quick. I still mean to, as soon as you let us go."

"You mean you're afraid of something?"

SALLY nodded. "Yes, I'm afraid. There's something or someone here who's pretty ruthless. The whole place isn't—how shall I put it?—it isn't what it seems. No, no, Inspector, I don't mean Communists. I can see that just trembling on your lips. Perhaps it isn't even criminal. I don't know. But I'll bet you anything you like that that awful woman knows about it all."

"What woman? Mrs. Hubbard?"

"No. Not Ma Hubbard. She's a dear. I mean old Nicoletis. That old she-wolf."

"That's interesting, Miss Finch. Can you be more definite? About Mrs. Nicoletis, I mean."

Sally shook her head. "No. That's just what I can't be. All I can tell you is she gives me the creeps every time I pass her. Something queer is going on here, Inspector."

"I wish you could be a little more definite."

"So do I. You'll be thinking I'm fanciful. Well, perhaps I am, but other people feel it too. I believe Black Bess does, but she wouldn't let on. And I think, Inspector, that Celia knew something about it."

"Knew something about what?"

"That's just it, what? But there were things she said. Said that last day. About clearing everything up. She had owned up to *her* part in what was going on, but she sort of hinted that there were other things she knew about and she wanted to get them cleared up too. I think she knew something, Inspector, about *someone*. That's the reason I think she was killed."

"But if it was something as serious as that——"

Sally interrupted him. "I'd say that she had no idea how serious it was. She wasn't bright, you know. She got hold of something, but she'd no idea that the something she'd got hold of was dangerous. Anyway, that's my hunch for what it's worth."

"I see. Thank you. . . . Now the last time you saw Celia Austin was in the common-room after dinner last night, is that right?"

"That's right. At least, actually, I saw her after that."

"You saw her after that? Where? In her room?"

"No. When I went up to bed she was going

"That rucksack," said Mrs. Hubbard, "is like the one we found cut up. Not what you'd expect a girl to do. It must have taken some strength—and, well, malice"

out of the front door just as I came out of the common-room."

"Going out of the front door? Out of the house do you mean?"

"Yes."

"That's rather surprising. Nobody else has suggested that."

"I dare say they didn't know. She certainly said good night and that she was going up to bed, and if I hadn't seen her I would have assumed that she *had* gone up to bed."

"Whereas actually she went upstairs, put on some outdoor things and then left the house. Is that right?"

SALLY nodded. "And I think she was going out to meet someone. It's my hunch that it would be one of the students. You see, if she wanted to speak to somebody privately, there was nowhere convenient in the house. Someone might have suggested that she come out and meet them somewhere outside."

"Have you any idea when she got in again?"

"No idea whatever."

"Do you know exactly what time it was when you saw her going out of the house?"

"I'd say it was about—ten. Perhaps a little past ten, but not much."

"I see," said Inspector Sharpe. "Thank you, Miss Finch, for what you've told me."

Last of all, the inspector talked to Elizabeth Johnston. He was at once impressed with the quiet capability of the girl. She answered his questions with intelligent decision and then waited for him to proceed.

"Celia Austin," he said, "protested vehemently that it was not she who damaged your papers, Miss Johnston. Do you believe her?"

"I do not think Celia did that. No."

"You don't know who did?"

"The obvious answer is Nigel Chapman. But it seems to me a little too obvious. Nigel is intelligent. He would not use his own ink."

"And if not Nigel. Who then?"

"That is more difficult. But I think Celia knew who it was—or at least guessed."

"Did she tell you so?"

"Not in so many words; but she came to my room on the evening of the day she died, before going down to dinner. She came to tell me that, though she was responsible for the thefts, she had not sabotaged my work. I told her that I accepted that assurance. I asked her if she knew who had done so."

"And what did she say?"

"She said——" Elizabeth paused a moment, as though to be sure of the accuracy of what she was about to say. "She said: 'I can't really be sure, because I don't see why. . . . It might have been a mistake or an accident. . . . I'm sure whoever did it is very unhappy about it, and would really like to own up.' Then Celia went on,. 'There are some things I don't understand, like the electric light bulbs the day the police came.'"

Sharpe interrupted. "What's this about the police and electric light bulbs?"

"I don't know. All Celia said was: '*I* didn't take them out.' And then she said: 'I wondered if it had anything to do with the passport?' I said, 'What passport are you talking about?' And she said: 'I think someone might have a forged passport.'"

The inspector was silent for a moment or two. Here at last some vague pattern seemed to be taking shape. A passport. . . .

He asked: "What more did she say?"

"Nothing more. She just said: 'Anyway I shall know more about it tomorrow.'"

"She said that, did she? 'I shall know more about it tomorrow.' That's a very significant remark, Miss Johnston."

The inspector was again silent as he reflected.

Something about a passport—and a visit from the police. . . . Before coming to Hickory Road, he had carefully looked up the files.

A fairly close eye was kept on hostels which housed foreign students. Number 26 Hickory Road had a good record. Such details as there were in the file were meagre and unsuggestive. A student wanted by the Sheffield police for living on a woman's earnings had been at Hickory Road for a few days and had then gone elsewhere, and had in due course been gathered in, tried and sentenced. There had been a routine check of all hostels and boarding-houses for a visiting student "wanted to assist the police" following the murder of a publican's wife near Cambridge, but that been cleared up, as had also the one or two other cases on file. None of them could possibly have any connection with the death of Celia Austin.

He sighed and looked up to find Elizabeth Johnston's dark intelligent eyes watching him. On an impulse, he said: "Tell me, Miss Johnston, have you ever had a feeling that there is something *wrong* about this place?"

She looked surprised. "In what way—wrong?"

"I couldn't really say. I'm thinking of something Miss Sally Finch said to me."

"Oh—Sally Finch!"

There was an intonation in her voice which he found hard to place. He felt interested and went on: "Miss Finch seemed to me a good observer, both shrewd and practical. She was very insistent on there being something—odd about this place, though she found it difficult to define just what it was."

ELIZABETH said sharply: "That is her American way of thought. They are all the same, these Americans: nervous apprehensive, suspecting every kind of foolish thing! Look at the fools they make of themselves with their hysterical spy mania, their obsession over Communism. Sally Finch is typical."

The inspector's interest grew. So Elizabeth disliked Sally Finch. Why? Because Sally was an American? Or did Elizabeth dislike Americans merely because Sally was an American, and had she some reason of her own for disliking the attractive red-head? Perhaps it was just simple female jealousy.

He resolved to try a line of approach that he had sometimes found useful. He said smoothly: "As you may appreciate, Miss Johnston, in an establishment like this, the level of intelligence varies a great deal. Most people we just ask for facts, but when we come across someone with a high level of intelligence——"

He paused. The inference was flattering. Would she respond?

After a brief pause, she said, "I think I

Continued on page 35

Examiner Edwards rings for a stop. If the bus touches the kerb as the novice at the wheel pulls up, he fails the stiffest test of his career

Safety gets a free ride

by MARTIN BENTLEY

Perfect driving—and no passengers—are James Edwards's rules. And his pupils must prove they know the busman's code

CLIMBING INTO THE BACK of an empty bus a few weeks ago James Edwards, senior examiner at London Transport's Road Services Training Centre at Chiswick, walked along the gangway to the seat behind the driver's cab. The window behind the driver had been removed, and Edwards told the man at the wheel to make for London's heaviest traffic district.

The driver, after some years at the job, had been sent to the training centre for a test after a series of accidents—scratching the sides of his bus and colliding with other vehicles. In the next forty minutes, the driving faults that had led to the accidents became clear to Edwards.

He noticed that the driver frequently took chances in traffic situations where cautious waiting would have been safer. He found, too, that the man kept operating the gear lever with his left hand while his right hand hung out of the side window, giving signals, leaving the steering wheel uncontrolled.

"Driving hands-off had become so much a habit that he didn't know he was doing it," says Edwards. "But sooner or later his front wheels might hit a pothole or a stray brick, and the sudden swerve this would cause could lead to a bad accident."

Edwards also saw that the driver lounged over the wheel in traffic jams and generally had a bored and careless attitude. Told that in future he could work for London Transport only as a conductor, the man resigned. "He was no good to us," says Edwards.

Almost all of the 22,000 London Transport bus drivers, who carry an average of nine million passengers a day, trained at the Chiswick centre and were passed as proficient by Edwards and his three assistant examiners, all of whom are recognized by the Ministry of Transport.

"We aim for a high, but not unreasonable, standard," says Henry Bates, who is in charge of the centre.

"Ability to drive is only a quarter of what is needed in a busman. He must be conscientious, because for most of his working day nobody is supervising him. He also needs a sense of duty towards the public. This may explain why so many busmen become councillors and sometimes mayors."

With his three assistants, Edwards spends most of his time testing newly trained drivers for their Public Service Vehicle licences. Trainees are men who have driven heavy lorries for three years, or London Transport employees, mostly conductors, who wish to become drivers. The lorry drivers are given a nine days' course, and the novices a course lasting for twenty-four days.

Learner Drove For The Gap

The examinations given by Edwards and his colleagues at the end of each man's course are a stiff test of driving ability. If a driver even touches the kerb with his wheels, Edwards fails him. A driver Edwards was examining some time ago drove into a space between a dust cart and a traffic island. "There was plenty of room, because another bus had just gone through the same gap," says Edwards. "But he was so keen to avoid the island that he hit the wing

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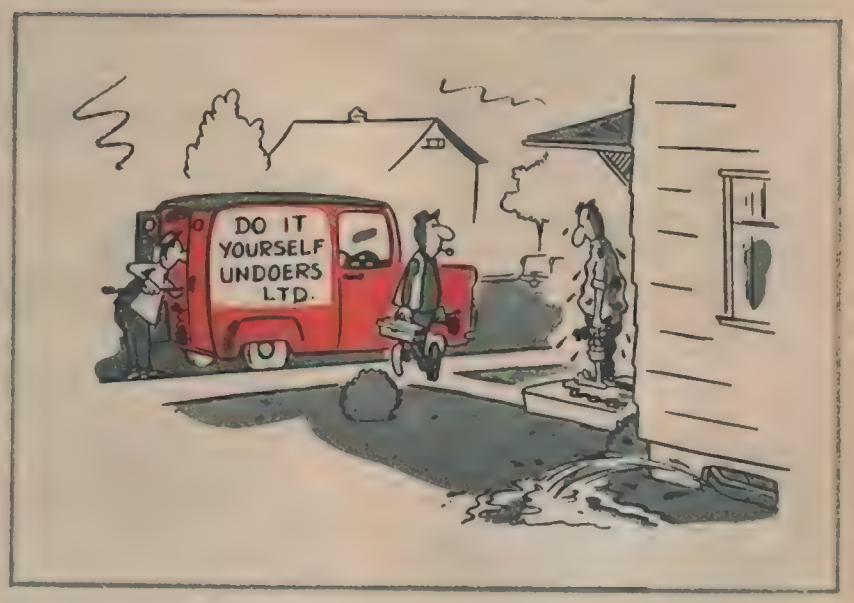

of the dust cart." The driver failed his test not only for hitting the dust cart but through one of the busman's greatest sins—being unable to judge the width of his bus.

Certain failure follows if a driver leaves his cab with the engine running, without first putting the preselector gears into neutral, because of the danger that the bus might move with nobody at the wheel. One of Edwards's colleagues, Frank Poil, decided one day that a trainee had passed his test, and told him: "Be careful how you get down."

The driver, a very short man, swung his body through the high door of the cab. Then, with one foot still in the bus, he remembered that he had left the gears engaged.

"I'm not out of the cab, guv'nor," he shouted. But he found himself so far off balance that he could not climb back unaided without first dropping to the ground and starting the climb from scratch. Feeling that his career was in the balance, he tried to struggle back into the cab.

Poil told another trainee to help him. "He put the gears into neutral," says Poil, "and I gave him a pass. After all that sweat, I am sure he will never make the same mistake again."

London's last trams were scrapped three years ago. Conversion of tram routes to bus routes was achieved in an operation lasting about two years. Simultaneously the instructors at the Training Centre turned hundreds of tram drivers into efficient bus drivers.

The instructors remember their task with mixed feelings. While most of the tram men were willing learners, already intimately acquainted with routes, stops, and London traffic, many elderly men had become too fixed in their ways after driving trams for more than thirty years.

They had two main faults. They sometimes forgot that their feet were controlling the bus's movements, and that a bus, unlike a tram, will turn only when the driver moves the steering wheel.

Forgot To Steer

One instructor, Victor Sturgeon, stood behind an ex-tram driver as he drove the bus straight for a policeman on point duty.

"His foot froze on the throttle and he forgot to steer," says Sturgeon. "The policeman had to jump for it while I leaned into the cab, clouted the driver's knee to free the accelerator and pulled on the handbrake."

Ordinary trainees, too, have become hypnotized when things go wrong, and instructors have had to pull them out of trouble while leaning awkwardly through the small opening behind the driving-seat. On a steep hill in a London suburb, an instructor named Henry Blake told his pupil to slow his descent by changing down into a lower gear. The driver mistakenly put the gear into neutral, and his bus gathered speed.

Instead of persevering with the gear lever, the learner took both hands from the wheel, clapped them over his eyes, and waited for the crash.

Blake leaned over the driver as the bus mounted the pavement. He managed to steer, without damage, between a lamp-post and a brick wall, regained the road, and stopped the bus with the handbrake. Later, Blake discovered that his wife had stood in the same street and watched the runaway.

Edwards and his colleagues fail approximately ten per cent of the trainees. Those who pass are urged to consider not only other road users, but also their passengers. They learn to pull in at bus stops parallel to the kerb and twelve to eighteen inches from it, with the rear of the bus level with the head of the queue.

Almost from the beginning their instruction is given on the highway in traffic, and they constantly stop at normal bus-stops to the ringing of the bell. Three trainees usually go out with one instructor, and the two who are not driving keep would-be passengers away.

Scattered Tickets

Edwards first drove buses when there were no proper stops. "We stopped every time a passenger rang the bell," he remembers. "Once I counted twenty-five stops along a two-and-a-half mile stretch that today has only eleven." Even fare stages were not marked. "We recognized them by the discarded tickets scattered on the pavement."

Though their working lives are spent with novices at the wheel, of vehicles weighing nearly eight tons, measuring twenty-six feet long and seven feet six inches wide, the instructors and examiners rarely become involved in accidents. This is due partly to their careful instruction and partly because they are quick to snatch at the handbrake when trouble threatens.

Frank Poil, however, saw the law of averages broken one day when he had four men to test. He left the centre with the first two learners, having arranged to meet the other two later in a different bus.

Within a few minutes he realized that the first man was weak on steering. This was confirmed when, in taking a right-hand turn, the learner knocked the illuminated top from a "Keep Left" sign.

The second learner took over. He drove five hundred yards, turned, and crumpled the wing of a stationary car.

Poil was late when he joined the second bus. There had been a shower of rain. As the first learner in this bus drove across wet wood blocks, a taxi braked violently in front to avoid another car. The bus slid, with wheels locked, into the taxi.

The last learner-driver took over. He drove well for ten minutes, then a lorry cut across his front. He hit the lorry's rear wing.

"I had to fail them all, even though some of the collisions were not the fault of the learners," says Poil. "Busmen must be able to avoid accidents, even when the conditions leading to them are created by others." THE END

BORN ON SNOWSHOES

Continued from page 19

is one of the easiest animals to trap. Even a blaze on a tree is often enough to make one come over to investigate.

Putting out the lines, we stopped the toboggan and made a set wherever we saw tracks, and wherever we made a set we blazed it. Our trail marker was one blaze on each side of a tree so that it could be seen from either direction. A trap we marked by two medium-sized blazes on the side of the tree that the set was on. Three small blazes meant a rabbit snare.

If we were out of traps and saw marten tracks where we wanted to make a set the next time we came, we marked the place with small blazes.

We marked a trail trap by a long blaze on a tree on each side of the trail, fifty yards before we came to the set. That was to remind us not to run the dogs into it, for I have more than once had a dog caught in a trail set.

Once it was my grey and white dog Pinto. He was third in the team that day. The first two got by, but Pinto stepped square on the trap and his whole foot was caught. I stopped the team and rushed up.

When I took hold of the trap Pinto yelped and snapped at my hand. I slapped his face and said, "Stop it, don't bite me now," and he wagged his tail. I put the trap, foot and all, on my knee and put my weight on the spring. At first I could get it only half-way down; it took a second try before I got the jaws open.

Pinto had his teeth set on my arm. He never moved until I told him: "Take it out, Pinto," and then he lifted his foot and took his teeth off my wrist. There were little blue marks from the teeth, but he hadn't bitten me; he had only been holding on.

Lonely Trails

We didn't get all the traps out the first winter and we changed them from time to time, but when our lines were all out and being worked, we had more than three hundred miles of trails. At convenient intervals we had cabins, ten of them altogether, as well as the home cabin, and on the long sidelines and out at the extensions of the main lines we had tents—twelve of them—as shelter camps.

A lot of our life was spent in those cabins and tents and on those trails. They got to be plenty familiar, but they were never like home.

On that first trip with John, when I was twelve, we had been out almost two months before we could start for the home cabin. By that time the caribou were moving north. We could see great bunches of them on the hills and along our trails wherever the timber opened up. Their towering horns looked like a leafless forest.

I have never seen so many caribou in all my life as we saw on our way home that trip. The wolves which followed the herd howled night and day.

Trapper's Tasks

I got my initiation into the work of running the lines that same winter, about a month after we got back from setting them out. The amount of work we had to do on the lines depended on what we caught.

In that cold, we wouldn't have dared to take off our mittens to skin anything out on the trail, even if most of the animals we caught hadn't been frozen stiff when we picked them up.

What we did was to throw them on to the toboggan and take them home to be skinned later. If we caught only small animals such as mink or marten, ermine or even fox, we had no difficulty, but wolves were harder to handle, and if we had a run of luck we sometimes got loaded down.

We ran the lines every few weeks, depending on the weather and how far out they were, and we had names for many of the hills, creeks and gulches that we travelled over. Midnight Gulch, Glacier Creek, Windy Valley, Stony Fork, Wind Creek, Roaring Creek and the Devil's Washboard were all on our Salmon River trapline.

Roaring Creek got its name because, although there was ice on the creek where our tent stood, the swift water underneath was not frozen. It made a loud, roaring noise as it poured over the rocks under the ice.

The Devil's Washboard was a terrible piece of country, a side hill about five miles long with lots of small, steep gulches coming down into the valley. Going over it, you were always travelling up and down. Hazel and Mom put in an especially hard day on it once, and didn't get so much as one pelt for their trouble. They didn't even see any fur sign.

When Mom came into the house she threw her cap and mittens down on a box in disgust and said: "That is the last time I ever go over that Devil's Washboard!" From that time on it kept the name.

Most of these names were changed as the traplines changed ownership, but some of them were passed on from trapper to trapper, and stuck.

Bullet Letters

There was a kind of law, which nobody ever broke, that if anyone stopped overnight in someone else's cabin he always left a note saying who he was and what he had taken, if anything. Few trappers ever had writing paper with them, so that the notes were written on scrap paper, cardboard boxes, even on the margins of magazines or the labels off tin cans, on wooden boxes or fur stretchers.

If the writer had no pencil, he sometimes used a .22 bullet, the lead being soft enough to make faint, clumsy letters. These were seldom easy to read, but no matter how faint the writing or peculiar the stationery, the letters were always appreciated.

Now and then, desperate for anything at all to leave a message on, a visitor would scratch a note in the snow with a stick, but unless the owner came along very soon, the wind and snow erased it.

Some trappers kept diaries on the boards of the cabin door or on the hewed sides of cabin logs. These were often very comical, and by reading along over doors and walls and boxboard tables, we could get a complete account of what the writer had been doing and how much fur he had been getting.

Our home cabin on the Salmon River was sixteen feet by eighteen. The beds were pole bunks with mattresses on them. There were no wardrobes, no chests of drawers. Our clothes hung on nails driven into the walls, or were laid into packing cases that could be pushed under the bunks. For rugs we had bearskins.

The cabin was kept warm by a small wood range and a heater. Each stove had a stack of wood behind it. For a cupboard we had shelves made of long box boards painted and covered with wrapping paper. Pots and pans hung on the wall. A petrol lantern, hung from the ceiling, gave us light.

It got crowded when we washed clothes and had to dry them inside, and with the five of us in the one room the cabin sometimes seemed a little dense, but we liked it and enjoyed it.

The cabin was always full of smells, generally food smells, because between journeys we spent a good deal of time preparing food for trips to the trapline, or to freeze down to use later in the winter.

Frozen Steaks

Our meat was always frozen in big chunks out in the cache. When we brought in a chunk and thawed it out, we cut it into steaks which we laid out on pieces of canvas and froze again.

Once they were frozen hard, the steaks could be peeled off the canvas and sacked in clean flour bags ready to use. The meat that would not make good steaks we ground into mincemeat and froze in small patties.

The beans, which were one of our staples on trips to the traplines, were also prepared in advance and frozen for later use. We boiled the brown beans, two or three big pots at a time, and put them into baking pans and froze them.

When they were good and hard, we thawed the pans just enough

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to loosen the cakes of beans, and then broke the cakes into pieces to be packed in flour sacks and kept frozen until needed.

Bread, cakes, doughnuts fried in moose tallow, and sometimes even cranberry, apple, mince or blueberry pies were also frozen and sacked.

Often in the evening in the home cabin we played draughts or knitted or listened to music. Our draughts board was home-made out of a piece of stiff cardboard, lined and coloured with a pencil. The draughtsmen were more of a problem, but we solved it by cutting twenty-four discs off an old broom handle and colouring twelve of them.

In the earlier years we had an old gramophone, and I will never forget the evenings when we played it or lay about in the cabin under the petrol lantern, which threw a white glare all around and a black shadow straight down. John was usually lying on his bed, reading and smoking. Hazel and Elsie were draughts players, Mom and I sewed or knitted.

Nothing improved our home so much as the radio we got a few years later. We bought a table model in Fort Yukon and took it up the river, and almost as soon as we landed we were seeing if we could make it work.

First we went out and cut three of the tallest spruces we could find, each about eight inches at the stump. We hauled them home and set them up about 150 feet apart, in a triangle, for the aerial masts.

Music From America

We were holding our breath as we connected up the batteries and turned the radio on. It didn't seem possible that far out here on the Arctic Circle, 280 miles by river from the last wilderness town, we could really be in touch with civilization.

The radio hummed, and as we twisted the dial in excitement, music came through clear and silvery as if it were being played just outside the door. The first station we got was KFI, Los Angeles. The next was New York. The dial could bring us almost any place we wanted. We could get them perfectly, except during a rainstorm.

Our roof had something to do with that, though we could never find out exactly what. We had covered our dirt roof with flattened-out petrol tins, and in a heavy rain the house was full of noise. But when we turned the radio on, the noise got ten times worse. For some reason every drop that hit the roof was amplified in the loudspeaker.

Kept Wounded Animal

On trips to the traplines we generally split into two groups, Hazel, Mom and Elsie going one way and John and I the other. Once, Hazel came home carrying a cardboard box. She set the box on the floor and opened it to reveal a little red fox. She had caught it in a wolf trap and, since its fur was worthless, had brought it home to make a pet of it.

Its leg was injured from the trap, and she bandaged the stump with clean cloths. She kept the fox in the tent and fed it on rabbit each day.

We had to change the bandage three times daily for the first ten days. Through all this, the fox was very gentle and never tried to bite us. Sometimes, as we worked on her, she licked our hands. We had a hard time to keep the wound healing, but after two weeks, when we had to go over the traplines, it seemed to be getting well.

Mom, who stayed at home that trip, was likely to sit and read or sew for hours at a time without making a sound. Apparently the fox got very angry because of this; if Mom moved suddenly or came near the box where the fox was kept, it would growl and snap at her. But if the radio were playing and noise going on, it would lie down and sleep.

Four days after Hazel and Elsie had left, I came back from my trip and found the bandage dirty and falling off. When I asked Mom why she hadn't taken care of it, she said she couldn't do a thing with that hateful little fox and if I tried I would get myself bitten.

I walked over to the fox and said: "How about getting fixed up?" The fox lay over on one side and held up a front leg and a hind leg, and I reached down and rubbed her side and found her as gentle as ever. I washed the leg with warm water and soap, and put salve and a new bandage on it, and she made no move to bite me. But Mom didn't trust her.

Later, the fox's leg was entirely healed and she was fat and sleek and full of life. On nights when the moon shone through the window, she jumped around all night and caused so much noise that Mom made us move her outdoors to a small kennel.

Put Fox On Chain

Hazel made her a leather collar which fastened with a buckle; we tied her with a light dog chain, the clips wired so that she couldn't get loose.

The fox belonged to Hazel, who was supposed to take care of her, but sometimes Hazel was gone. One day when I had just finished feeding the dogs, Mom asked me if I had fed the fox, and I said no, I had forgotten the darned fox. Mom jumped up impatiently, said something about the fox being a nuisance, and went to feed her.

Next morning when Hazel and Elsie got in, Hazel said: "How's the fox?"

"Fat and sassy," I said. "Mom has her tied up across the ditch."

Hazel and Elsie went over to see her. In a minute they yelled: "She's not here!"

I went over. The chain lay across the top of the kennel, the collar unbuckled and hanging from its end. No one ever knew how she had got loose, but we thought we could guess.

We never saw her again, but she didn't go far away from the cabin, for we found her three-legged tracks all over the place. Once we even found where she had killed a Canada goose, and so we were pretty sure that she wouldn't starve.

That was our only pet except for our dogs—which were really working animals—that we had in the thirteen years we spent on the Salmon River. But we couldn't blame Mom, even if she had turned the fox loose. She had plenty to think about without being bothered by a fox.

We all admired Mom. She was only five foot three and she weighed then about ten stone ten, though later she shrank a good deal. She was a very pretty woman, with sky-blue eyes and nearly black hair. She sometimes got discouraged, but she never gave up for a minute.

She was always working. If she wasn't out on the trail or cutting wood, she was cleaning the cabin, baking bread, washing clothes, knitting, or sewing moccasins for us.

When we were small she often played games with us on days when we couldn't play outside. She showed us all the indoor games she knew—Musical Chairs, The Farmer in the Dell, Drop the Handkerchief, In and Out the Windows, and many others that I have since forgotten. And she often sang to us. I imagine I know more songs of her day than any person of my age, and I learned them all from her.

Tackled Men's Work

It never entered our heads to question how she treated us, or how John treated us. We never stopped to think what was girl's work and what was men's work. It was all work and if it needed to be done, we had to do it. Mom set us an example that way by never shirking any job, however hard.

The seven dogs we had started with in 1929 were added to as we girls got older, and in the summer of 1932 we bought a bitch named Wolf so that we could raise our own dogs. On July 2, while we were camped on a mosquito-infested bar near the mouth of the Salmon, she had nine pups.

Eight were grey. One—mine—was black. She was the weakling of the litter, weighing less than a pound; she was part police dog and part husky

and part a lot of other things that we never knew about, but she was my dog. I named her Katy.

When it was cold and rainy I often tucked her inside my sweater and sat by the camp fire to warm her shivering little body. Before her eyes were open she had her name, and as she grew we used to play together, Katy tugging at my hair and growling in my ears.

She was special from the time she was a pup. One chill, rainy morning when Hazel got out to start a fire, Katy came out sniffing and growling from behind the grub box. As Hazel said, she didn't have teeth enough to hurt anything, but she was guarding that grub box and sounding fierce enough to scare a bear.

The three pups that we kept—Lad, Dan and Katy—got their first training to harness that autumn. By the time they were six months old they were pulling a light toboggan by themselves, following the team of older dogs. Sometimes Katy was in the lead, sometimes Lad, but when they were sixteen months old I started training Katy seriously to lead a team of five dogs.

She was so playful that it took some time to teach her not to run off the trail after every track. But she was quick as a flash, quicker than any of the others, and everything was like a game to her. At the end of that traping season she was already a leader, though she wasn't yet two. I had two other leaders, but neither was as good as Katy.

One day Elsie and I were going over a sideline. It had snowed two feet since anyone had used the trail. The blazes were all covered and the white bumps of the marten trap houses looked like any other white bumps.

Katy was in the team, third dog back, as she had been when we cut that trail weeks before. I walked ahead until I could no longer follow the trail at all. Then I tried putting Katy out ahead as a loose leader, and snowshoed behind her, letting the team come on after me.

She was ploughing through snow so deep and loose that it fell in on her back; at times all I could see was her head, like a beaver's head at the point of his wake. But she led us right along. After a couple of miles I thought I would rest her. I put Happy on, but the moment I said: "All right," he crawled in under a spreading spruce tree and lay down where the snow was shallow.

No matter how I coaxed, he wouldn't come out. Finally, I had to go in and drag him out. He wouldn't go ahead on the trail and kept crawling under trees, until in disgust I put him back in the team and took Katy out.

"Okay, Katy, go ahead," I said. With one big jump she was past me into the loose snow. She ploughed on for a quarter of a mile and then stopped and looked at a bump beside the trail. When I went over and stepped on the bump with my snowshoe, I saw the cut ends of the sticks that formed a marten house.

With my snowshoe as a shovel, I dug the trap out, rebuilt the house and reset the trap. After that, Katy stopped at every set on that trail and lay down in the snow with her nose pointed towards the bump that was the trap house. More than once Elsie called: "Are you sure she's on the trail? I don't remember this place."

But she was on, all right. She knew better than we did.

Katy Got Through

When we came to the end of that sideline, Katy's eyes were full of water and the snow sifting through her fur had formed iceballs all along her back from her tail to her ears.

By that time it was dark; we had only stars to light our way home. But Katy led us back in two and a half hours over a trail that we had been eight hours in breaking, coming out. That was just one of many times she saved the day with her faithfulness and her cleverness in following snowed-up trails.

She was like her police dog ancestors —faithful to one master, which was me. She often slept under the bunk inside the little out-cabins while the other dogs slept in their shelters outside.

In the team she paid no attention to the commands of others, but the slightest whistle from me and she was in the collar. Other members of the family could drive her if I first told her to go and mind them, but if they put her in the team and I hadn't told her to mind, she wouldn't pull.

The only way I could keep her from

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working too hard was to turn her loose behind the team now and then, for if she was in the harness she never stopped pulling.

One day I was handling the toboggan and John was snowshoeing behind. He was old and didn't walk very fast, and soon we got a long way ahead of him. When I stopped on the trail to wait for him, Katy jumped up to me to be petted, and kept looking back and whining.

"All right," I said. "Go back and get him, then."

Off she went. In about five minutes I heard John say, "Oh, go ahead!" Then he swore and said, "Well, stay behind then."

Soon he came into sight with Katy right behind him. As he came up he said: "What's the matter with this dog? Did you whip her? She won't go ahead of me. She just lay down and whined until I passed her and then she came along."

"I told her to go back and get you," I said.

John looked at her and said: "Well, she did. She walked all over my snowshoes trying to make me get along faster."

Katy jumped up and licked my face and I patted her and told her she was a good dog. Right away she went round after John again.

Rolling Grey Smoke

One of the hardest trips I can remember began one Christmas Day. John and I had finished running the lines and were starting back towards the home cabin, five days' travel away. It was bright and sunny when we left and everything was covered with six inches of new snow.

The little log cabin in which we had spent the night looked as if it had been taken from a Christmas card, with the green spruces all round it drooping with fresh snow, and the grey smoke rolling up against the clearness of the sky.

The sun tipped the hills with pink. We had waited for the sun to shine on the hilltops on purpose—waited until eleven o'clock—because it was forty degrees below freezing.

Just before dark we reached Basin Cabin, built on a hillside. Both of us were stiff with cold; my fingers turned white as I unstrapped the dog harness and unhitched the dogs. As I carried loads from the toboggan into the cabin I looked at the thermometer on the wall. It was fifty-four degrees below freezing now. A fire and a snug cabin never felt better.

All night we were perfectly comfortable, but in the morning, when I opened the narrow caribou-skin door set close to the ground, the cabin filled instantly with thick white steam. I scrambled out and looked at the thermometer. It was seventy-eight degrees below freezing.

The dogs were white with frost from their own breathing and each was steaming like a pan of hot water. With my ears stinging after only two or three seconds, I crawled back through the door, yelling: "Seventy-eight below, and that's *cold*!"

There was no choice. We had to go on, for we had only three nights' dog food left and that was just enough to get us home, with four days and three nights on the trail. We put on our heaviest clothing and started out. A cloud of white steam moved with us.

Dogs Like Ghosts

In the intense cold, caribou and moose could be picked out easily by the steam that hung over them. Every little stick that broke sounded like the report of a .22 rifle. The snow was like sand that ground and swished against the toboggan.

The dogs were white as ghosts, and the fur of our parka hoods was encircled with frost. We both had to walk all the time to keep from freezing.

The cabins were cold for hours after we got the fires going, and every time we opened the door to go out we got a shower of frost on our heads.

Any water spilled on the earth floor froze and stayed frozen. Water in the water cans froze solid inside the cabin at night, and the cans popped like gunshots when we put them on the fire to thaw.

On the fourth day we saw the smoke of our home cabin and as we got nearer, there were Hazel and Elsie sawing wood to beat the band. They were working so hard that they didn't hear us coming, but when they did, they ran to unhitch our teams and told us to get in and warm up while they cared for the dogs.

Mom had made a pot of tea and had bread and butter ready. We took a big breath and loosened our heavy clothes and pulled the ice-crusted parkas off our heads and sat down.

Our thermometer had been right in recording seventy-eight below. It was still seventy-eight degrees below.

I have often heard people say that wolves will not attack a human being, but we had at least two experiences that made us think otherwise.

The first was one February, during the caribou migration, one of those bright winter days when the spruce seemed to have turned greener and the sun was bright on the snow. As Mom and Elsie and I came in from a sideline, a flock of ravens was diving down on something in the flat below us and we knew that there must be a wolf killing down there.

Far off beyond, I heard a pack of wolves howling. Then ahead of us I heard another pack, closer.

As we travelled on towards home we passed six different caribou killed and partly eaten by the wolves, and when we reached our little cabin on the hillside we could hear packs of wolves all round us, though faint and far away.

I wanted to build a new sled and had only one birch runner. When we had fixed the camp and cared for the dogs, Elsie and I went up the hill behind the cabin in search of a good birch tree.

Along the thickly wooded slope we waded, pretending that we were two caribou in deep snow. I was fifteen and Elsie twelve; we still played a lot of games as we worked.

"I said: "I hope those wolves don't come and eat us up."

Elsie let out a long howl and galloped towards me. "I'm a wolf!"

"Then I can't be a caribou," I

It's The Custom . . . in ABINGDON

The mayor is chaired. The horns were won in a street brawl in 1700

Morris dancers revel through the town

THERE was a landslide victory during the Ock Street Mayor election in Abingdon, Berkshire, last year. Tom Hemmings, whose family have been Morris dancers in Abingdon for two hundred and fifty years, polled two-thirds of the 208 votes, and became Mayor of Ock Street —Mayor of the Morris Dancers— for the fifth year running.

After the election, Hemmings, who is now sixty-eight, was chaired in an old cane and curled oak chair covered with evergreens, and carried up and down the half mile of Ock Street holding the regalia of the Morris dancers' troupe: a silver sword, a two-hundred year old applewood chalice, and an iron collecting box.

With the party, and decorated with flowers, went the chief insignia of the troupe: a large pair of horns, all that is left of a bullock which was roasted in Abingdon's market place in 1700. At the time, the up-town residents of Abingdon claimed the horns as a souvenir. So did the west-end residents who lived around Ock Street. The dispute was settled by a brawl. The west end won.

Nowadays, Tom Hemmings keeps the Ock Street horns in his garden shed.

Hemmings has been dancing with the Abingdon troupe for fifty-seven years. When Morris dancing was dying out about fifty years ago, his father, James, and his uncle, William, were discovered by the famous folk dance expert, Mary Neal, and later consulted by another famous expert, Cecil Sharp. They were the only men in Britain who could still perform many of the steps and remember some of the ancient Morris songs.

William Hemmings, who was a labourer and then seventy-five years old, went to London and danced with a troupe before Edward VII. He once taught Morris dances at the Savoy Theatre, London, for a Granville Barker production of *The Winter's Tale*.

By ancient tradition, the people who live in Ock Street have the right to vote in the election of the Mayor of the Morris dancers. At noon on the Saturday nearest to June 21, a ballot-box is stood in the front doorway of the house of one of the candidates. Votes are cast until four-thirty, when they are counted. The name of the Mayor is then announced, and the chairing takes place.

At six o'clock the same day, the dancers "dance the town," stopping at the inns for the chalice to be filled. Their repertoire includes: "A-nutting We Shall Go," "The Curly-headed Ploughboy," and "Brighton Camp," dances that they perform all over the country during the year.

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said. "Caribou and wolves don't stay together."

We went wallowing round in the snow on all fours, howling at each other, and the wolves answered from somewhere over the hill. Then we couldn't get any answering howls out of them; they had all stopped. "We must have said the wrong thing to them," I said.

From down below we heard Mom calling us to come to eat, and we ran and fell and rolled down the hill to the cabin.

As we were going in, we heard one of the dogs bark and then growl. They were looking up the hill where we had been. Elsie and Mom and I stood in front of the cabin and looked to where the dogs were looking. It was utterly still.

"If you want to hear some wolves, I'll start some howling for you," I said. I howled and Elsie howled.

We had hardly closed our mouths before the wolves started, and they were very close. The dogs growled and the hair on their backs stood on end. Elsie looked at me and I knew what she meant. The wolves were right up to where we had been five minutes before.

All that evening we could hear them from every direction.

As we went in to go to bed, Mom said: "I would hate to be a poor caribou tonight." For a while we sat on the bunks and she told us stories of how the wolves in Russia killed people. Every once in a while the dogs started howling again and we went outside to shut them up.

Growling Softly

About nine o'clock the pack was so close that the dogs whined and growled and wouldn't shut up. As I got off the bunk to go outside, the three dogs tied behind the cabin started to yell as though they were being killed. I rushed out with the .30-40 rifle. All three dogs were lying flat on the snow, as near the cabin as their chains would let them go and all were growling softly. "Pete, Dick, Jerry, shut up!" I said.

They looked at me and whined. Then Candy, tied about thirty feet in front of the house, let out a yell. I whirled round. "What the hell was that?"

I heard a wolf running through the snow. The hillside was so thickly grown with small spruce trees that even in the bright moonlight it was impossible to see him.

Mom said: "If you want to keep that sugar-coated mutt of yours, you had better move him closer to the house tonight."

I turned to Elsie and said: "Go down and get Candy while I stand guard over you."

Elsie retorted: "Why don't *you* get him? Give me the gun and I'll keep you covered. And don't make a false move."

"Do I have to keep my hands up?"

We all laughed. I gave her the gun and went down and untied Candy. I could hear the wolves jumping through the snow, and as soon as I unsnapped his chain he started pulling for the cabin so hard that it was all I could do to hold him.

Heard Wolves Run

We tied all seven dogs so close that we could cover any one of them from the door. For a while we stood listening to the wolves howling.

"Why don't you fire a shot with your Krag and scare them away so we can get some sleep?" Mom asked.

I fired and we heard the wolves running through the brush. "That should settle them for the night," Mom said.

We went to bed, but from time to time the dogs howled and we yelled at them to shut up. About 11.30 a loud howling awakened us and Mom said: "Darn those dogs. Go out and stop them before they call the wolves back again."

I stepped outside. The dogs were not making a sound. The howling was all from the wolves and they were all round the cabin.

Mom came to the door. "Listen," I said. "They'll all shut up if I give a yell." I screamed and they stopped howling. Mom told me to keep quiet.

Then all at once all the wolves in the world were howling, right on top of us. I threw a shell into the chamber of my gun, and Mom said: "Fire a shot, quick. Those are too close for comfort. If you're going to scream as if you were half-dead, those wolves will be in here to finish the job."

I fired. Some wolves barked, some whined, but they all ran. I could hear them lunging through the snow and I fired again, just for luck.

The rest of the night was quiet, but when we went out and looked round the next morning the snow was trampled and tracked in every direction.

There must have been fifty wolves round the cabin. It would have been a good time to see whether they really would attack a human, but we were just as glad we had stayed inside the log walls.

Fear In Cache Creek

Our second experience with a pack of wolves five years later was even more convincing to us. One day about midwinter, Elsie and Hazel were going over a sideline up a small creek called Cache Creek.

The girls were nearly at the end of the line, where the trail ran along the foot of the green, spruce-covered hill. Along the creek itself, spruce and alders were so thick that it was impossible to see more than a few feet.

They were moving steadily along the trail, when the dogs put their ears up and started to run. Elsie and Hazel thought they were chasing a caribou, and, though they did not want to kill any caribou, they did want to get over the line as fast as possible and return to the cabin, and so they urged the dogs on.

The team was almost loping when a huge grey wolf appeared on the trail, coming towards them. Elsie, driving, stepped on the brakes and yelled: "Whoa!"

The team came to a stop, but the wolf did not. Two or three more appeared out of the brush-hidden trail behind him. Then the woods were suddenly alive with wolves on every side, surrounding the team.

The gun was in the toboggan under the traps, bait and snowshoes. Hazel dug for it as the wolves closed in. Some of them were pups, not yet a year old, and they were afraid, but the older wolves had no fear at all and were obviously coming in for the kill. One of the dogs snapped the fur under a big wolf's chin and the wolf skipped round but came on.

Elsie, hearing a sound behind her, looked back. Not more than twelve feet back on the trail, a grey wolf was sneaking up on her. "Hazel!" she said, "get that gun quick!"

Attacked At Speed

Hazel passed her the gun and she pumped in a shell and shot without taking aim. The shot broke the wolf's shoulder and he vanished into the brush.

He had barely disappeared when another came up the trail from the rear, moving right in at a lope. Elsie dropped him just nine feet from the toboggan.

The two shots scared the rest of the pack off for the time and they disappeared back into the brush. The girls did not follow the wounded one; they had only the one gun and if they left the dogs the wolves would close in and kill them.

So they picked up the one dead wolf, turned the team round and got back to the cabin as fast as they could. The pack followed them, howling and barking but keeping just out of sight almost all the way.

That was our closest shave with Mr. Wolf. Next season we properly turned the tables on him. That was in the year of our big catch. I remember it not only for the forty wolves we took, but for the mauling I escaped from one of the biggest grizzly bears that I ever encountered.

NEXT WEEK: I ask a trapper to marry me

"I *am* relaxing!!!"

HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

Continued from page 26

understand what you mean, Inspector. The intellectual level here is not, as you say, very high. Nigel Chapman has a certain quickness of intellect, but his mind is shallow. Leonard Bateson is a plodder—no more. Valerie Hobhouse has a good quality of mind, but her outlook is commercial. What you want is the detachment of a trained mind."

"Such as yours, Miss Johnston."

She accepted the tribute without a protest, and Sharpe realized with some interest that behind her modest, pleasant manner, here was a young woman who was positively arrogant in her appraisement of her own qualities.

"I'm inclined to agree with your estimate of your fellow students, Miss Johnston," he went on. "But you, as you say, have a trained mind. That's why I'd value your views—the views of a powerful detached intellect."

For a moment he was afraid he had overdone it, but he need have had no fears.

"There is nothing wrong about this place, Inspector. Pay no attention to Sally Finch. This is a decent, well-run hostel. I am certain you will find no trace of any subversive activities."

Inspector Sharpe felt a little surprised. "It wasn't really subversive activities I was thinking about."

"Oh—I see——" She was a little taken aback. "I was linking up what Celia said about a passport. But looking at it impartially and weighing up all the evidence, it seems quite certain to me that the reason for Celia's death was a private one. I'm sure it had nothing to do with what I might call the hostel as a hostel, or anything 'going on' here."

After Elizabeth Johnston had gone, Sharpe said to Sergeant Cobb: "That's a very interesting girl. She's got the ego of a Napoleon, and I strongly suspect that she knows something.

"I'm coming back tomorrow with a search warrant."

HERCULE POIROT paused in the middle of the sentence he was dictating. Miss Lemon looked up questioningly.

"Yes, M. Poirot?"

"My mind wanders!" Poirot waved a hand. "After all, this letter is not important. Be so kind, Miss Lemon, as to get me your sister upon the telephone."

"Yes, M. Poirot."

A few moments later Poirot crossed the room and took the receiver from his secretary's hand.

"'Allo!" he said.

"Yes, M. Poirot?" Mrs. Hubbard sounded rather breathless.

"I trust, Mrs. Hubbard, that I am not disturbing you?" said Poirot.

"I'm past being disturbed."

"There have been agitations, yes?" Poirot asked delicately.

"That's exactly what there have been, M. Poirot. Inspector Sharpe finished questioning all the students yesterday, and then he came back with a search warrant today and I've got Mrs. Nicoletis on my hands with raving hysterics."

Poirot clucked his tongue sympathetically. Then he said: "It is just a little question I have to ask. You sent me a list of those things that had disappeared—and other queer happenings. What I have to ask is this: did you write that list in chronological order?"

"No, I didn't. I'm sorry—I just put them down as I thought of them. I'm so sorry if I've misled you."

POIROT said, "I should have asked you before. But it did not strike me then as important. I have your list here. It begins: one evening shoe, bracelet, powder compact, diamond ring, cigarette lighter, stethoscope, and so on. But you say that that was not the order of disappearance?"

"No."

"Can you remember now, or would it be too difficult for you, what was the proper order?"

"Well, I'm not sure if I could now, M. Poirot. You see it's all some time ago. I should have to think it out."

"Of course," said Poirot. "Then what I would ask of you, madame, is to sit down when you have the leisure and try to put down, as nearly as you can, the order in which the various incidents occurred."

Poirot hung up the phone. "I am vexed with myself," he said to Miss Lemon. "I should have made quite sure from the start the exact order in which these thefts occurred."

"Dear, dear," said Miss Lemon, mechanically. "Are you going to finish these letters now, M. Poirot?"

But once again Poirot waved her impatiently away. . . .

Inspector Sharpe, meanwhile, had certainly caused some disturbance at Hickory Road. On arrival back there with a search warrant on Saturday morning, he had demanded an interview with Mrs. Nicoletis, who always came on Saturdays to do accounts with Mrs. Hubbard. He had explained what he was about to do.

Mrs. Nicoletis protested with vigour. "But it is an insult, that! My students they will leave—they will all leave. I shall be ruined——"

"No, no, madam. I'm sure they will be sensible. After all, this is a case of murder."

"It is not murder—it is suicide."

"And I'm sure once I've explained, no one will object——"

Mrs. Hubbard put in a soothing

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word. "I'm sure," she said, "everyone will be sensible."

"Thank you, madam," said the inspector. "Then I'll make a start here, Mrs. Nicoletis, in your sitting-room."

An immediate and violent protest came from Mrs. Nicoletis at the suggestion. "You search where you please," she said, "but here, *no*! I refuse."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Nicoletis, but I have to go through the house from top to bottom."

"That is right, yes, but not in my room. *I* am above the law."

"No one's above the law. I'm afraid I shall have to ask you to stand aside."

"It is an outrage," Mrs. Nicoletis screamed with fury. "You are officious busybodies. I will write to everyone. I will write to my Member of Parliament. I will write to the papers."

"Write to anyone you please, madam," said Inspector Sharpe, "I'm going to search this room."

He started straight away upon the bureau. A large carton of confectionery and a variety of assorted junk rewarded his search. He moved from there to a cupboard in the corner of the room.

"This is locked. Can I have the key, please?"

"Never!" screamed Mrs. Nicoletis. "Never, never, never shall you have the key! Beast and pig of a policeman, I spit at you. I spit! I spit!"

"You might just as well give me the key," said Inspector Sharpe. "If not, I shall simply prise the door open."

"I will not give you the key! You will have to tear my clothes off me before you get the key! And that—*that* will be a scandal."

"Get a chisel, Cobb," said Inspector Sharpe resignedly.

Mrs. Nicoletis uttered a scream of fury. Inspector Sharpe paid no attention. The chisel was brought. Two sharp cracks and the door of the cupboard came open. As it swung forward a large consignment of empty brandy bottles poured out.

"Beast! Pig! Devil!" screamed Mrs. Nicoletis.

"Thank you, madam," said the inspector politely. "We've finished in here."

Mrs. Hubbard tactfully replaced the bottles while Mrs. Nicoletis had hysterics. One mystery, the mystery of Mrs. Nicoletis's tempers, was now cleared up.

POIROT's telephone call came through just as Mrs. Hubbard was pouring out an appropriate dose of sedative from the private medicine cupboard in her sitting-room. After replacing the receiver she went back to Mrs. Nicoletis, whom she had left screaming and kicking her heels on the sofa in her own sitting-room.

"Now you drink this," said Mrs. Hubbard. "And you'll feel better."

"Gestapo!" said Mrs. Nicoletis, who was not quiet but sullen.

"I shouldn't think any more about it if I were you," said Mrs. Hubbard soothingly.

"Gestapo!" said Mrs. Nicoletis again. "Gestapo! That is what they are!"

"They have to do their duty, you know," said Mrs. Hubbard. "After all, Mrs. Nicoletis, there has been a murder, remember. And after a murder one has to put up with certain things which might not be very pleasant at ordinary times."

"I spit upon the murder!" said Mrs. Nicoletis. "That little Celia, she commits suicide. She has a silly love affair and she takes poison. It is the sort of thing that is always happening."

"Well," said Mrs. Hubbard, returning full circle to where the conversation had started, "I shouldn't worry any more about it now."

"That is all very well for *you*. Me, I have to worry. It is not safe for me any longer."

"Safe?" Mrs. Hubbard looked at her, startled.

"It was my private cupboard," Mrs. Nicoletis insisted. "Nobody knows what was in my private cupboard. I did not want them to know. And now they *do* know. I am very uneasy. They may think—what will they think?"

"Who do you mean by *they*?"

Mrs. Nicoletis shrugged her large, handsome shoulders and looked sulky. "You do not understand," she said, "but it makes me uneasy. Very uneasy."

"You'd better tell me," said Mrs. Hubbard. "Then perhaps I can help you."

"Thank goodness I do not sleep here," said Mrs. Nicoletis. "These locks on the doors here, they are all alike; one key fits any other. No, thanks to heaven, I do not sleep here."

Mrs. Hubbard said: "Mrs. Nicoletis, if you are afraid of something, hadn't you better tell me just what it is?"

Mrs. Nicoletis gave her a flickering look from her dark eyes and then looked away again. "You have said it yourself," she said evasively. "You have said there has been murder in this house, so naturally one is uneasy. Who may be next? One does not even know who the murderer is. That is because the police are so stupid, or perhaps they have been bribed."

"That's all nonsense and you know it," said Mrs. Hubbard. "But tell me, have you got any cause for real anxiety?"

MRS. NICOLETIS flew into one of her tempers. "Ah, *you* do not think I have any cause for anxiety? You know best as usual! You know everything! You are so wonderful! You manage everything so well. And now you want to manage *my* affairs! But that, no. I keep my affairs to myself and nobody shall pry into them, do you hear?"

"Please yourself," said Mrs. Hubbard, exasperated.

"You are a spy—I always knew it."

"A spy on what?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. Nicoletis. "There is nothing here to spy upon. If you think there is, it is because you made it up. If lies are told about me I shall know who told them."

"If you wish me to leave," said Mrs. Hubbard, "you've only got to say so."

"No, you are not to leave. I forbid it. Not at this moment. Not when I

Guess What?

by GLYN DANIEL

THIS piece of earthenware has a lustrous brown glaze. It is five inches high and was made in north-east Wales. The original owner would have had others like it. Is it . . .

(a) One of a pair of fire-dogs?
(b) A pen rest?
(c) A door-knob?
(d) A furniture support?

Glyn Daniel tells you more on page 38

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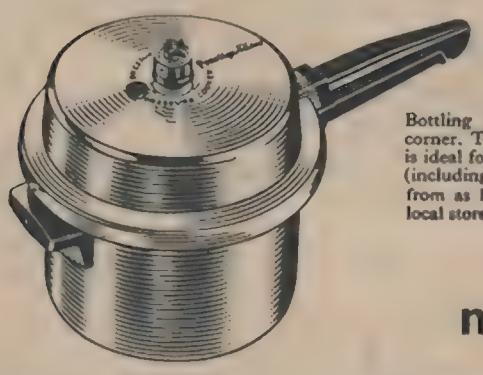

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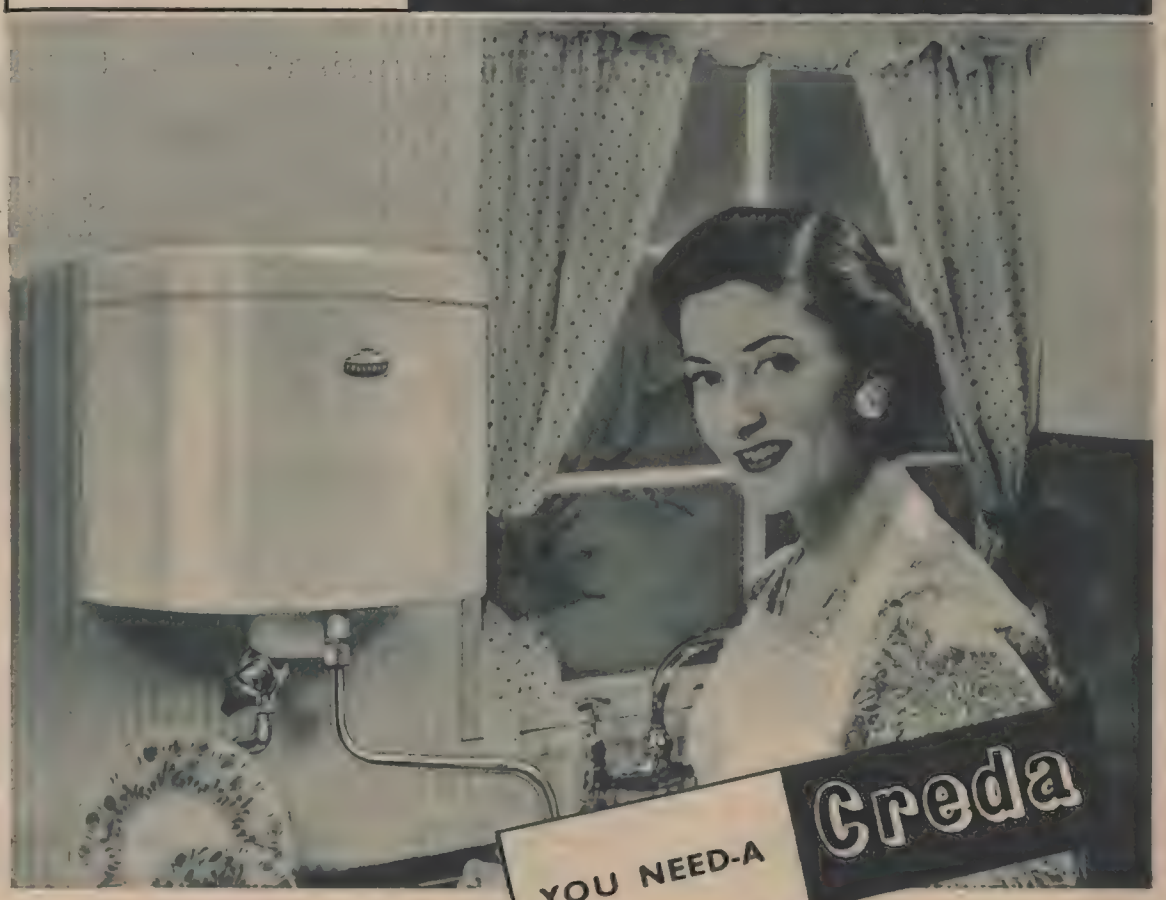

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FOR MEN, WOMEN, and KIDDIES

have all the cares of the police, of murder, of everything else on my hands. I shall not allow you to abandon me."

"Oh, all right," said Mrs. Hubbard helplessly. "But really, it's very difficult to know what you do want. Sometimes I don't think you know yourself. You'd better lie down on my bed and have a sleep. . . ."

Hercule Poirot alighted from a taxi at 26 Hickory Road. The door was opened to him by Geronimo, the manservant, who welcomed him as an old friend. There was a constable standing in the hall and Geronimo drew Poirot into the dining-room and closed the door.

"It is terrible," he whispered, as he assisted Poirot off with his overcoat. "We have police here all time! Ask questions, go here, go there, look in cupboards, look in drawers, come into Maria's kitchen even. Maria very angry. She say she like to hit policeman with rolling-pin but I say better not. I say policeman make us more embarrassments if Maria do that."

"You have the good sense," said Poirot, approvingly. "Is Mrs. Hubbard at liberty?"

"I take you upstairs to her."

"A little moment." Poirot stopped him. "Do you remember the day when certain electric light bulbs disappeared?"

"Oh yes, I remember. But that long time ago now. One—two—three month ago."

"Exactly what electric light bulbs were taken?"

"The one in the hall and I think in the common-room. Someone make joke. Take all the bulbs out."

"You don't remember the exact date?"

Geronimo struck an attitude as he thought.

"I do not remember," he said. "But I think it was on day when policeman come, some time in February——"

"A policeman? What did a policeman come here for?"

"He came to see Mrs. Nicoletis about a student. Very bad student. Not do work. Have woman and she go out with men for him. Very bad that. The police come here and they talk to Mrs. Hubbard about him. And she say he not stop here because she no like him and she send him away."

"And that was the day the bulbs were missing?"

"Yes, because I turn switch and nothing happen. And I go into common-room and no bulb there, and I look in drawer here for spares and I see bulbs have been taken away, so I bring just candles."

POIROT digested this story as he followed Geronimo up the stairs to Mrs. Hubbard's room. He was welcomed warmly by Mrs. Hubbard, who was looking tired and harassed. She held out, at once, a small piece of paper to him.

"I've done my best, M. Poirot, to write these things down in the proper order, but I wouldn't like to say that it's a hundred per cent accurate now."

"I am deeply grateful to you, madame. And how is Mrs. Nicoletis?"

"I've given her a sedative and I hope she's asleep now. She made a terrible fuss over the search warrant. She refused to open the cupboard in her room and the inspector broke it open and quantities of empty brandy bottles tumbled out."

"Ah!" said Poirot, making a tactful sound.

"Which really explains quite a lot of things," said Mrs. Hubbard.

Poirot sat down and studied the piece of paper that Mrs. Hubbard had handed to him. "Ah!" he said again after a moment or two. "I see that now the rucksack heads the list."

"Yes. It wasn't a very important thing, but I do remember now, definitely, that it happened before the jewellery and those sort of things began to disappear. It was all rather mixed up with some trouble we had about one of the coloured students. He'd left a day or two before this happened and I remember thinking that it might have been a revengeful act on his part before he went. There'd been—well—a little trouble."

"Ah! Geronimo has recounted to me something like that. You had, I believe, the police here?"

"Yes. But the student had gone."

"And it was after that you found the rucksack?"

"Yes, I think so—it's hard to remember. You see, Len Bateson was going off on a hitch-hike and he couldn't find his rucksack anywhere and then he created a terrible fuss about it and everyone did a lot of searching and at last Geronimo found it shoved behind the boiler all cut to ribbons. Such an odd thing to happen. So curious—and pointless, M. Poirot."

"Yes," Poirot agreed. "Curious and pointless."

HE remained thoughtful for a moment. Then he asked, "And it was on that same day, the day that the police came to inquire about this African student, that some electric bulbs disappeared—or so Geronimo tells me. Was it that day?"

"Well, I really can't remember. Yes, yes, I think you're right, because I remember coming downstairs with the police inspector and going into the common-room with him and there were candles there."

"Who was in the common-room?"

"Oh, I think most of the students had come back by that time. It was in the evening, you know, just about six o'clock. I asked Geronimo about the bulbs and he said they'd been taken out and we were right out of spares. I was rather annoyed as it seemed such a silly pointless joke. I thought of it as a joke, not as stealing, but I was surprised that we had no more electric bulbs because we usually keep quite a good supply in stock. Still, I didn't take it seriously, M. Poirot, not at that time."

"The bulbs and the rucksack," said Poirot thoughtfully.

"But it still seems to me possible," said Mrs. Hubbard, "that those two things have no connection with poor little Celia's peccadilloes. You remember she denied very earnestly that she'd ever touched the rucksack at all."

"Yes, yes, that is true. How soon after this did the thefts begin?"

"Oh dear, M. Poirot, you've no idea how difficult all this is to remember. Let me see—that was March when the police came. No, February—the end of February. Yes, yes, I think Genevieve said she'd missed her bracelet about a week after that."

"And after that the thefts went on fairly continuously?"

"Yes."

"And this rucksack was Len Bateson's?"

"Yes."

"And he was very annoyed about it?"

"Well, you mustn't go by that, M. Poirot," said Mrs. Hubbard, smiling a little. "Len Bateson is that kind of boy, you know. Warm-hearted, generous, kind to a fault, but with one of those fiery, outspoken tempers."

"What was it, this rucksack—something special?"

"It was just the ordinary kind."

"Could you show me one like it?"

"Colin's got one, I think, just like it. So has Nigel. And Len himself has bought another. The students usually buy them at the shop at the end of the road. It's a very good place for all kinds of camping equipment and hikers' outfits. Very cheap—much cheaper than any of the big stores."

"If I could just see one of these rucksacks, madame?"

Mrs. Hubbard obligingly led him to

Guess What?

THE object on page 36 is a Victorian furniture support which was made at the Buckley Potteries in Flintshire. Sets of these supports were used to raise furniture off damp stone floors or to prevent carpets from being marked.

"The night-watchman describes him as being a squat, monkey-like man, small, beady eyes, mouse-coloured hair, ungainly, badly dressed, clumsy walk . . ."

Colin McNabb's room. Colin himself was not there, but Mrs. Hubbard opened the wardrobe, stooped, and picked up a rucksack which she held out to Poirot.

"There you are, M. Poirot. That rucksack's exactly like the one that was missing and that we found all cut up."

"It would take some cutting," murmured Poirot, as he fingered the rucksack appreciatively. "One could not snip at this with a little pair of embroidery scissors."

"Oh, no, it was not what you'd expect a—well, a girl to do. It must have taken some strength, I should say. Strength and—well, malice, you know."

"I know, yes, I know. It is not pleasant to think about."

"Then, when later that scarf of Valerie's was found, also slashed to pieces, well, it did look—what shall I say?—unbalanced.'

"Ah," said Poirot. "But I think there you are wrong, madame. I do not think there is anything unbalanced about this business. I think it has aim and purpose."

"Well, I dare say you know more about these things, M. Poirot, than I do," said Mrs. Hubbard. "All I can say is, I don't like it. As far as I can judge we've got a very nice lot of students here and it would distress me very much to think that one of them is—well, not what I'd like to think he or she is."

Poirot had wandered over to the window. He opened it and stepped out on to the old-fashioned balcony.

Colin's room looked out over the back of the house. Below was a small, sooty garden. "Where is the boiler house?" asked Poirot.

"That's the door to it, down there next to the coal house."

"I see." He gazed down speculatively. "Who else has rooms facing this way?"

"Nigel Chapman and Len Bateson have the next room to this."

"And beyond them?"

"Then it's the next house—where the girl's rooms are. First the room Celia had, and beyond it Elizabeth Johnston's, and then Patricia Lane's. Valerie and Jean Tomlinson look out to the front."

Poirot came back into the room. "He is neat, this young man," he said, looking round appreciatively.

"Yes. Colin's room is always very tidy. Some of the boys live in a terrible mess," said Mrs. Hubbard.

"You say that these rucksacks are bought at the shop at the end of the road?"

"Yes."

Poirot looked once more out of the window and down into the garden, then took his leave of Mrs. Hubbard. He walked down Hickory Road until he came to the shop. After a careful study of the goods displayed in the window, he entered and represented himself as desirous of purchasing a rucksack for a hypothetical nephew.

"He makes *le camping*, you understand," said Poirot at his most foreign. "He goes with other students upon the feet and all he needs he takes with him on his back, and the cars and the lorries that pass, they give him a lift."

At once, the proprietor, a small, obliging man with sandy hair, replied: "Ah, hitch-hiking. They all do it nowadays. Hitch-hike themselves all over Europe, some of these young people do. Now it's a rucksack you're wanting, sir. Just an ordinary rucksack, I suppose?"

"I understand so. Yes. You have a variety then?"

"Well, we have one or two extra-light ones for ladies, but this is the general article we sell. Good, stout, stand a lot of wear, and really very cheap though I say it myself."

He produced a stout canvas affair which was, as far as Poirot could judge, an exact replica of the one he had been shown in Colin's room. Poirot examined it, asked a few more unnecessary questions and ended by paying for it then and there.

"Ah yes, we sell a lot of these," said the man as he made it up into a parcel.

"A good many students lodge round here, do they not?"

"Yes. This is a neighbourhood with a lot of students."

"There is one hostel, I believe, in Hickory Road?"

"Oh yes, I've sold several to the young gentlemen there. And the young ladies. They usually come here for any equipment they want before they go off. My prices are cheaper than the big stores'. There you are, sir, and I'm sure your nephew will be delighted with the service he gets out of this."

Poirot thanked him and went out with his parcel. He had only gone a step or two when a hand fell on his shoulder. It was Inspector Sharpe.

"Just the man I want to see," said Sharpe.

"You have accomplished your search of the house?"

"I've searched the house, but I don't know that I've accomplished very much. There's a place along here where you can get a decent sandwich and a cup of coffee. Come along with me if you're not busy. I'd like to talk to you."

The sandwich bar was almost empty. The two men carried their plates and cups to a small table in a corner, and here Sharpe recounted the results of his questioning of the students.

"The only person we've got any evidence against is young Chapman," he said. "And there we've got too much. Three lots of poison through his hands. But there's no reason to believe he'd

Good Wicket

"Bags I don't fetch the ball! That man next door's got a long red beard and a black hat. Looks like an ogre."

"*No, idiot, he's a famous artist. He draws pictures of ladies with one eye and three legs.*"

"Soppy, I call it."

"*Still, he did give me a glass of lemon squash last week. Rose's, too.*"

"Phew! Think he'll stump up again?"

"*It's a cert. But if he shows you his pictures, just say 'Very interesting'—like Father does.*"

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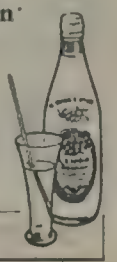

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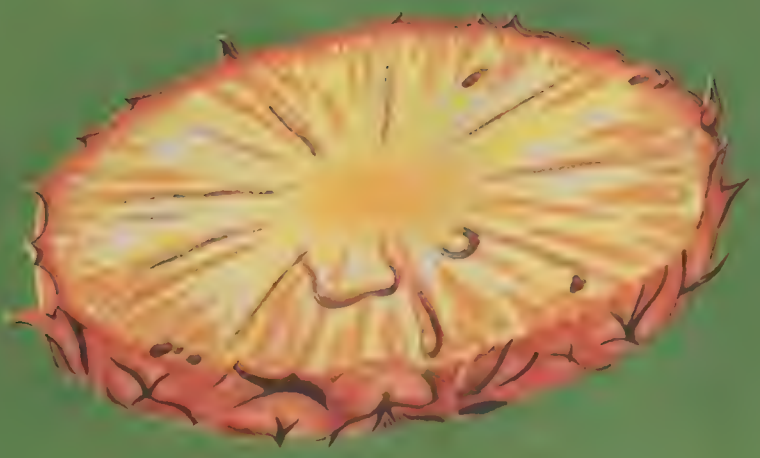

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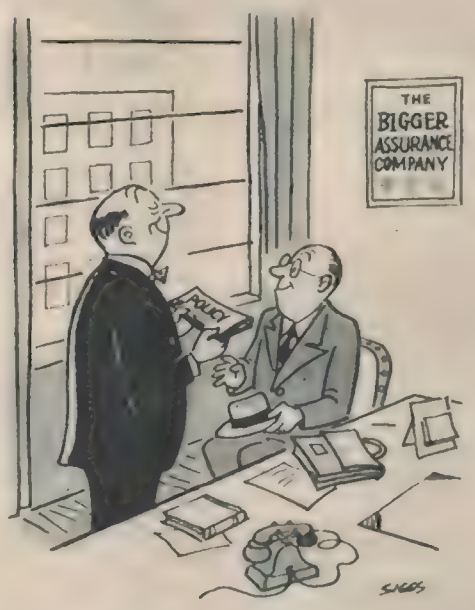

BRIAN decided to insure his life for £1,000 with the Bigger Assurance Company, and they sent him a proposal form to complete; it contained a number of questions about his health and other matters.

One group of questions was put in these words: "Has a proposal for life assurance ever been made on your life at another assurance office? If so, where? Was it accepted or declined?"

Brian's answer to these questions was: "Insured now with the Better Assurance Company for £1,000. Premium at normal rates. Policy effected last year."

This statement was correct, so far as it went. What Brian omitted to say was that he had recently tried to take out policies with two other assurance companies, and had met with a refusal in each case.

The Bigger Company accepted the proposal and the policy was completed; Brian paid his first premium.

Several weeks later, the Bigger Company heard about Brian's unsuccessful attempts to take out other policies. Believing that Brian had given them deliberately misleading information on his proposal form, the Bigger Company took legal proceedings to have his policy declared void and of no effect.

"In these matters, the company relies to a great extent on the word of the proposer," said the representative of the Bigger Company, in court. "Brian had knowledge that we might never have learned.

"It is the duty of anyone who answers questions in an insurance matter to make the fullest disclosure of anything which may influence the judgment of the company.

"Brian's statements were true so far as they went but they were not full answers."

"I gave what I considered to be fair and proper answers to the Bigger Company's questions," replied Brian, in his defence. "The company had every opportunity to investigate me, examine me and refuse me, yet they accepted the proposal. Now that they have done so, they must carry out their obligations."

What is your verdict? For the legal position, turn to page 42

any animus against Celia Austin, and I doubt if he'd have been as frank about his activities if he was really guilty."

"It opens out other possibilities, though."

"Yes—all that stuff knocking about in a drawer. Silly young ass!"

He went on to tell Poirot about Elizabeth Johnston and her account of what Celia had said to her. He concluded: "If what she said is true, it's significant."

"Very significant," Poirot agreed.

The inspector quoted. "'I shall know more about it tomorrow.'"

"And so—tomorrow never came for that poor girl! But your search of the house — did that accomplish anything?"

"There were one or two things that were—what shall I say? Unexpected, perhaps."

"Such as?"

"Elizabeth Johnston is a member of the Communist Party. We found her Party card."

"Yes," said Poirot, thoughtfully. "That is interesting."

"You wouldn't have expected it," said Inspector Sharpe. "I didn't until I questioned her yesterday. She's got a lot of personality, that girl."

"I should think she was a valuable recruit to the party," said Hercule Poirot. "She is a young woman of quite unusual intelligence."

"It was interesting to me," said Inspector Sharpe, "because she has never paraded those sympathies, apparently. She's kept very quiet about it at Hickory Road. I don't see that it has any significance in connection with the case of Celia Austin, but it's a thing to bear in mind."

"What else did you find out?"

"Well," Sharpe reflected for a moment. "It seems Leonard Bateson's father is in Longwith Vale Mental Hospital, a certified patient. I don't suppose it's of any particular interest, but. . . ."

"But Len Bateson's father is insane. Probably without significance, as you say, but it is a fact to be stored away in the memory. It would even be interesting to know what particular form his mania takes."

"Bateson's a nice young fellow," said Sharpe, "but of course his temper is a bit—well, uncontrolled."

Poirot nodded. Suddenly, vividly, he remembered Celia Austin saying, "Of course, I wouldn't cut up a rucksack. That's just silly. Anyway, that was only temper." How did she know it was temper? Had she seen Len Bateson hacking at that rucksack?

He came back to the present to hear Sharpe say, with a grin: "You heard about Mrs. Nicoletis and her private cupboard?"

"Yes, I heard about that."

"Never seen so many empty brandy bottles in my life! And was she mad at us!" Sharpe laughed, and then, abruptly, became serious. "But we didn't find what we went after. No passports except strictly legitimate ones."

"You can hardly expect such a thing as a false passport to be left about for you to find, *mon ami*. You never had occasion, did you, to make an official visit to 26 Hickory Road in connection with a passport? Say, in the last six months?"

"No. I'll tell you the only occasions on which we did call round—within the times you mention."

He detailed them carefully. Poirot listened with a frown. "All that, it does not make sense." He shook his head. "Things will only make sense if we begin at the beginning."

"What do you call the beginning, Poirot?"

"The rucksack, my friend," said Poirot softly. "The rucksack. All this began with a rucksack."

MRS. NICOLETIS came up the stairs from the basement where she had just succeeded in thoroughly infuriating both Geronimo and the temperamental Maria. "Liars and thieves," said Mrs. Nicoletis in a triumphant voice. "All Italians are liars and thieves!"

Mrs. Hubbard, who was just descending the stairs, gave a short vexed sigh. "It's a pity," she said, "to upset them just while they're cooking the supper."

"What do I care?" said Mrs. Nicoletis. "*I* shall not be here for supper."

Mrs. Hubbard suppressed the retort that rose to her lips.

"I shall come in as usual on Monday," said Mrs. Nicoletis.

"Yes, Mrs. Nicoletis."

"And please get someone to repair my cupboard door first thing Monday morning. The bill for repairing it will go to the police, do you understand? To the police. And I want brighter electric light bulbs put in the passages. The passages are too dark."

"You said especially that you wanted low-power bulbs in the passages—for economy."

"That was last week," snapped Mrs. Nicoletis. "*Now*—it is different. Now I look over my shoulder—and I wonder who is following me."

Was her employer dramatizing herself, Mrs. Hubbard wondered, or was she really afraid of something or someone. Mrs. Nicoletis had such a habit of exaggerating everything that it was always hard to know how much reliance to place on her statements.

Mrs. Hubbard said doubtfully: "Are you sure you ought to go home by yourself? Would you like me to come with you?"

"I shall be safer there than here, I can tell you!"

"But what is it you are afraid of? If I knew, perhaps I could——"

"It is not your business. I tell you nothing. I find it insupportable the way you continually ask me questions."

"I'm sorry, I'm sure——"

"Now you are offended." Mrs. Nicoletis gave her a beaming smile. "I am bad tempered and rude—yes. But I have much to worry me. And remember I trust you and rely on you. What I should do without you, dear

A NASTY CUT. But it need not go septic. Creamy Savlon applied promptly will help nature heal.

Spots, cuts, burns heal quickly with creamy Savlon

HERE is a powerful antiseptic in the form of a soothing cream. Its name is Savlon—made by I.C.I. Savlon's germ-killing action extends over the whole range of bacteria likely to attack the skin. Use it for common skin troubles like sores and small spots; and for cuts, burns, scalds.

Savlon deals with germs without hindering nature's own healing process—and thus *helps nature heal.* From chemists, 2/6d. a tube.

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COMMON SKIN TROUBLES due to infection start to clear up after treatment with white, creamy Savlon. You just smooth it on your skin. It attacks the germs and the healing process begins.

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SAV.25

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the perfect hairdressing

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Mrs. Hubbard, I really do not know. See, I kiss my hand to you. Have a pleasant weekend. Good night."

Mrs. Nicoletis went down the front steps, out through the gate and turned to the left. Hickory Road was a fairly broad road. The houses in it were set back a little in their gardens. At the end of the road, a few minutes' walk from Number 26, was one of London's main thoroughfares, down which buses were roaring. There were traffic-lights at the end of the road and a public house, The Queen's Necklace, at one corner.

Mrs. Nicoletis walked in the middle of the pavement and from time to time sent a nervous glance over her shoulder, but there was no one in sight. Hickory Road appeared to be unusually deserted this evening. She quickened her steps a little as she drew near The Queen's Necklace. Taking another hasty glance round she slipped rather guiltily into the saloon bar.

As she sipped the double brandy that she had asked for, her spirits revived. She no longer looked the frightened and uneasy woman that she had a short time previously. Her animosity towards the police, however, was not lessened. She murmured under her breath: "Gestapo! I shall make them pay. Yes, they shall pay!"

She finished off her drink, ordered another, and brooded over recent happenings. Unfortunate, extremely unfortunate, that the police should have been so tactless as to discover her secret hoard, and too much to hope that word would not get around among the students and the rest of them. These things always——

She started violently as a voice behind her said: "Why, Mrs. Nick, I didn't know this was a haunt of yours."

She wheeled round sharply and then gave a sigh of relief. "Oh, it's you," she said. "I thought——"

"Who did you think it was? The big bad wolf? What are you drinking? Have another on me."

"It is all the worry," Mrs. Nicoletis explained with dignity. "These policemen searching my house, upsetting everyone. My poor heart. I have to be very careful with my heart. I do not care for drink, but really I felt quite faint outside. I thought a little brandy . . ."

"Nothing like brandy. Here you are."

MRS. NICOLETIS left The Queen's Necklace a short while later, feeling revived and positively happy. She would not take a bus, she decided. It was such a fine night and the air would be good for her.

Yes, definitely the air would be good for her. She felt not exactly unsteady on her feet but just a little bit uncertain. One brandy less, perhaps, would have been wise, but the air would soon clear her head.

After all, why shouldn't a lady have a quiet drink in her own room from time to time? What was there wrong with it? It was not as though she had ever allowed herself to be seen intoxicated. Intoxicated? Of course, she was never intoxicated. And anyway, if they didn't like it, if they ticked her off, she'd soon tell them where they got off! *She* knew a thing or two, didn't she? If she liked to tell what she knew. . . .

Mrs. Nicoletis tossed her head in a bellicose manner and swerved abruptly to avoid a pillar-box which had advanced upon her menacingly. No doubt, her head *was* swimming a little. Perhaps if she just leaned against the wall here for a minute. If she closed her eyes for a moment or two . . .

Some time later Police Constable Bott, swinging magnificently down on his beat, was accosted by a timid-looking clerk.

"There's a woman here, officer. I really—she seems to have been taken ill or something. She's lying in a heap."

Police Constable Bott bent his energetic steps that way, and stooped over the recumbent form. A strong aroma of brandy confirmed his suspicions.

"Passed out," he said. "Drunk. Ah well, don't worry, sir, *we'll* see to it."

To be continued next week

NIGHT AT THE PLAZA

Continued from page 12

intrude, was silent too. But there was something else he wanted to say.

"You must think me a bit of an impostor, staying at the Plaza. I don't know what made me do it."

He had spoken in a whisper, and she answered in the same tone. "It is very expensive?"

"Very expensive." Henry grinned ruefully. "But I didn't mean that. The Plaza's no place for me. I was surprised they let me in."

He thought she had not understood him at first, for she did not answer. But looking at her, he saw she was smiling at him, shaking her head slightly. "Henry, Henry, what are we to do with you? You are prepared to pay what they ask."

"But the Plaza——"

"Is like everything else in life," she said. "If you want it, you can have it. It depends only what you are prepared to pay."

HE began to speak again, but again she interrupted. "One night is too short to complete your education, Henry. What is important for you to realize is that you can do anything in the world that other people can. One day all our hearts will stop. Everybody in the world will be dead. Then there are no Plazas, no trips to London or America, no beautiful nights on the Embankment. All over. Poof!"

"Take what you can, eh?"

"If the conscience allows. If it is legitimate."

She laughed, but Henry did not laugh with her. He was gazing at her eyes, shining in the moonlight, at her lips, glistening and vivacious. He said, a little roughly, "If an idea is appealing, one should do it."

"Why not?" she said. "It is——"

Henry kissed her. He hardly knew what came over him. He was appalled at himself. But when, after a moment of surprise, the girl kissed him back, she did so with such energy and skill that he was left gasping.

She drew back at length and regarded him. "I admire you, Henry. That was a courageous thing to do." She gazed at him for another moment, enigmatically, and then, bewilderingly, she stood up. "And now we must return."

"Oh, no," Henry said. "Not yet. Please, not yet."

He was so crestfallen, there was so much urgency and disappointment in his voice, that she laughed softly and brushed his face lightly with her hand. "Come, Henry. We must both rise early tomorrow. I like you but I must leave you. That is what the sailors say, eh?"

Henry got up. He said incredulously, "We can't leave like this, Valerie."

She said gaily, "Then you must come to America with me. I will take you in my little bag."

He didn't know how she could joke about it. He fell into step glumly.

"You must not be so serious, Henry. We might never meet again. We might never have met at all."

"But we have met," Henry said. He wanted to add, "And I love you," but it was absurd after so short a time, and he said instead, "And I wish you didn't have to leave."

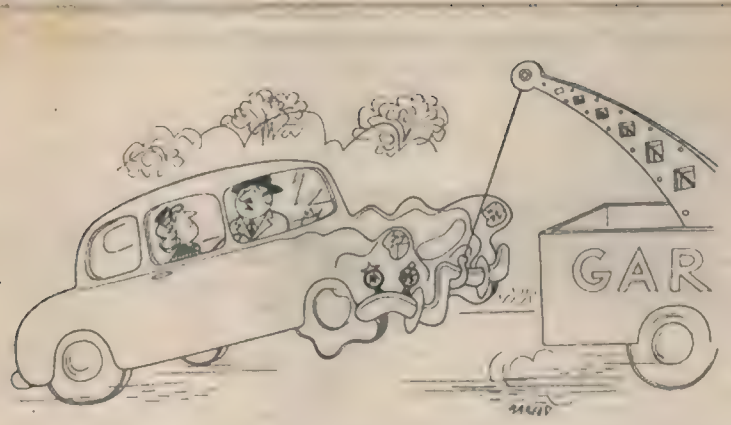
"Ah, it is sad," the girl said. "But only for tonight. Tomorrow you will soon forget me."

"I won't," Henry said bleakly, and she gave his arm a little squeeze.

They walked back in silence. The

Consider your verdict

IN the case on page 41, the judge said that in insurance matters of this kind, the non-disclosure of a material fact may invalidate a policy, even after it has been accepted. Deliberately failing to give a full answer, as Brian had, was equivalent to concealment—especially in view of the difficulty of discovering the truth if he didn't tell it. The Bigger Company won the case.



"Next time don't bother to salute"

girl was thoughtful and Henry too full of sad emotion to speak. They went into the hotel and up in the lift and Henry saw her to her door.

"Well," she said, "so it is goodbye, Henry."

"Yes," said Henry. He couldn't trust himself to say more.

"I hope tomorrow goes well with you. Remember, you can do anything you want if it seems to you legitimate. Your mother will appreciate that if your attitude is determined."

"Can we write to each other?" Henry said desperately.

"If you want to."

"If I want to!" Henry said. And then, fully realizing that this was the end of it, the beginning and the end of it, all so quickly, he said tremulously, "Oh, Valerie, I've got to see you again. I've got to."

She smiled at him, and touched his cheek. "I am just a girl you have met, Henry. I am not *the* girl. There will be others, you'll see."

Then she had put her key in the door, had kissed him quickly on the mouth and had gone inside.

Henry took his way miserably to his own room. So that was it, the night was finished; the beginning and the end, and all he was left with was sadness and disappointment.

He washed dejectedly and got into bed and put out the light, and knew at once that he wouldn't sleep. He could not stop thinking of the girl. At the mere thought of her in her room just along the corridor from his own, his heart began jumping with such erratic fierceness in his body that he was alarmed it would tear itself loose.

To try to calm himself, he went over the magical evening detail by detail; and suddenly it wasn't magical at all. All he had done was to make an utter fool of himself. What a fool he had been to think the girl liked him and understood him! He could see now that she had been laughing at him all the time.

In the lonely darkness of the alien, four-guinea room, he could see it all so clearly. She had only spent the evening with him because she was at a loose end on her overnight stop in London, and had thought he might amuse her. And he had done that. He heard the echo of her laugh in the darkness of the room, and it was not warm and gentle, as in his foolishness he had thought it was, but lightly mocking and contemptuous.

He thought of the way he had opened his heart to her, and writhed with shame. If he had taken his mother's advice, none of this would ever have happened. He saw the whole business of his coming to London as the height of folly. How could he ever have hoped to get a job here?

His mother had been right all along.

He slept finally, and awoke in the morning with a bitter taste in his mouth, and lay for a moment too depressed to move. Then he felt for his watch on the bedside table, and leaped out of bed at once. It was a quarter to nine; three quarters of an hour to the interview, and he had to have his breakfast and pay the bill first. And to see Valerie. And then, as he dressed, it struck him: she would have gone. She had to be at the air terminal at nine o'clock. The knowledge gave him a moment of relief, and then, unreasonably, left him in such desolation that he paused, gazing at himself in the mirror, wondering if anything on this terrible morning was worth the effort.

The girl was gone, and the job was gone; neither was for him. Better by far to take the train quietly back to where he belonged. His mother would understand; there would be no recriminations; bygones would be bygones. And he would have had his moment. . . .

He continued dressing. He went down for breakfast, and left the meal, unable to think of food. And then he paid his bill. It was as he was turning away with his change that the first jolt of the day came.

A RECEPTION clerk said, "Oh, Mr. Denver. Just a moment, please. I think I've got a letter for you here." Henry turned. He took the letter. His legs had gone so suddenly weak that he had to find a chair; and then his hands were trembling so much that he partly tore the letter as he took it from the envelope.

It was on the Plaza's notepaper. It read: "Dear little Henry, I must go and you are not here yet. This is the address where you can write to me." Henry skipped the address quickly. "I cannot promise to write to you, Henry. Life is too short. But I cannot forget you and will always be glad to hear from you. I think you will get your job. You will do whatever you want to do, for you are a very formidable boy! I remember you happily, Henry, and kiss you again. Much, much love, Valerie."

"Well, I'm jiggered," Henry said.

He read it again. He read it three times, smiling like a lunatic. He felt like a lunatic; unbearably sad in one part of him, wanting to swing from the chandeliers in another part. But it was getting late. It was gone nine.

He stuffed the letter in his pocket and picked up his case and went jauntily out of the hotel, and there outside was a taxi, and he shouted at it, as though he had been shouting to taxis all his life. In the taxi he had time to read the letter another half-dozen times before they pulled up at Rossiter and Peabody's.

"Dear little Henry," he said to himself, smiling, as he went in through the door, and all his doubts and fears had gone. For if it was not this job, it would be the next, or the next. This was what he wanted to do and it was a legitimate thing. He had crouched too long with fear; it was time now to stand up. For those with courage the future was limitless, and he had courage, courage for himself and for his mother.

Then he was at the inquiry office and he said to the girl, "My name is Henry Denver. I have an appointment with Mr. Wilcox." He said it as though he were saying, "I have an appointment with life," purposefully; formidably.

THE END

Drawing from life of a man with a clue, specially commissioned by the House of Whitbread from

"I know there are people who don't bother much, but it matters tremendously to me which beer I drink

—and I know what I'm getting when I pour out a

WHITBREAD

WHITBREAD'S PALE ALE

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DISPRIN DISSOLVES. When you put a Disprin tablet into water, it foams and dissolves. This "liquid form" of aspirin passes more rapidly into the blood-stream and so the pain will be relieved in the shortest possible time.

FAR LESS ACID. Disprin, being soluble and far less acid than aspirin, is far less likely to upset the stomach.

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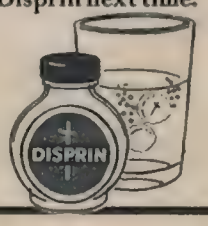
DISPRIN REGD. is recommended for all those conditions in which aspirin was taken



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The fly is a carrier of filth and infection. Whenever it enters your home, it brings with it not only uncleanliness, but disease!

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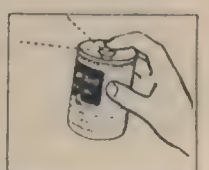
This outstandingly effective fly-spray contains the world-famous I.C.I. discovery, gamma BHC, the safest and most powerful of all the modern insecticides. It is lethal to flying insects, highly economical in use — and completely harmless to man and domestic animals.



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KIT-E-KAT CHOCK-FULL OF FISH AND MEAT

cooked and ready to serve

CROSSFIRE

Continued from page 21

far clicking of stone from below and behind. Dallu cocked his head, twirled his moustaches, and nodded. Puransing and Ranbahadur were well on the move and getting closer.

Another two minutes, and then a tiny scrambling started in the bushes below. Dallu held his rifle ready.

A hare ran across the hill. Another thirty seconds—not a sound anywhere. Suddenly something clattered sharply on the rocks immediately below them, six feet away. A shadow flashed across the sun and Tommy ducked. The *oorial's* sharp hooves whizzed close as it bounded over their heads, and was gone. Dallu swung up with the rifle—too late.

He looked at Tommy, his face suffused with rage and disappointment, and started making excuses. He was a great little man for being in the right. Then Tommy thought he must have smiled or done something else to prick the subahdar's wounded pride into action. Before he could stop him, Dallu was out on the granite slabs, trying to cut off the goat by a diagonal across and up to the crest. Tommy watched in amazed admiration.

Dallu dabbed at the granite face with one hand from time to time, held the rifle away with the other, and bounded quickly up.

Puransing and Ranbahadur came, moving slowly up the hill, and Tommy scrambled up with them to join Dallu. The old man was breathing hard, and still furious. There was no sign of the *oorial*. They stood in a bunch a little below the crest, and Tommy said, "I'm sorry, subahdar sahib, that was bad luck. We must get on to A Company now."

Pebbles clinked down the slope they had just climbed. Dallu's little brown eyes flashed, his brown, unwrinkled hands grasped the rifle, and he whispered, "Down! *Oorial* come back."

They sank quickly into cover, Tommy thinking, *Damn it, this is lunacy*. . . . A man walked out on the trail below the granite slabs. More followed him. They had rifles slung on their shoulders, long daggers tucked into their loose dirty-grey and black cotton clothes, or sheathed at the back of the neck, the handle sticking up just behind the right ear.

THEY swung along with the careless stride of the Mahsud tribesman, long slow steps with a lilt in them, and they glanced to right and left as they moved, in the eternal alertness of the Frontier. They were big men, with hawk noses and unkempt beards, and they were on the warpath.

Tommy's heart began to thump again and he lay very still, counting, until forty Mahsuds had passed. Then Dallu motioned with his hand. The four of them slipped back over the ridge crest and down on the other side.

Tommy had become used to thinking of Dallu as just a pompous little old man, but his attack on the dangerous granite slabs had shown Tommy there was more in him than that. Now he knew there was more, much more. His determination gripped them all. He stuck out his jaw, his beady eyes flashed and his whisper had the whip-crack quality of a parade ground order. "Must go A Company, before Mahsuds! Must make noise, then A Company know Mahsuds here. Look, may be more Mahsuds, so careful!"

He pointed along the side of the hill and they moved off. Tommy had a vivid mental picture of the forty human vultures striding along parallel with him, just the other side of the ridge crest. They could not be more than two hundred yards away. His hand was sweaty where he held the knurled grip of his pistol.

The ridge crest fell away to a sloping plateau, the lion's neck. Dallu said, "Ready!"

They burst out, nearly together, into a clear space. Fifteen yards away Tommy saw a tribesman's back, and more ahead. This nearest one had heard them. He whipped round, his rifle swinging up. Puransing shot him dead, aiming and firing with the careless, cruel grace of a veteran. In a smooth continuation of the same movement he was on his belly behind a rock, firing at the other tribesmen, his dark face unmoved. Dallu crouched and shot over his head. Tommy hurled himself to his stomach and aimed his pistol.

The thunderous echoes sprang out across the hillsides, the sharp smell of cordite drifted to him on the wind eddies, and a man called out harshly in a strange tongue.

HEARING sounds from the right, down the hill, Tommy tugged at Dallu's sleeve. The subahdar nodded and whispered, "Yes, more. Back into bush!" and nodded to Puransing and Ranbahadur to cover them.

Tommy jumped up with the subahdar and ran zig-zagging back like a hare farther into the scrub. Bullets smacked past in vicious flights and Dallu exclaimed once. They flung themselves down, panting, in thick cover. Blood trickled on Dallu's upper arm. His shirt sleeve was torn, and a red stain edging wider over it. He moved his arm about and nodded. Puransing and Ranbahadur fired slowly to keep the tribesmen's heads down.

Dallu pulled out his whistle, blew one sharp blast, and cuddled his rifle again. The other two ran back. Something grey and black moved behind them and Dallu fired twice. The grey and black thing stopped moving. Twigs fell off the trees all round and a splinter of stone whined off up the hill. More bullets spattered about, and then they were all running again. Tommy felt a mad excitement grip him, half joy, half panic. He tore through thorn bushes as if they did not exist. Their spikes caught his face and arms.

The *oorial* sprang out of a bush and trotted across their front. It was an easy shot. Dallu stopped and raised his rifle—then slowly lowered it. A look of unutterable despair and rage crossed his face . . . but in the silence they could hear the tribesmen running along the hill above them, and very close. It would have been suicide to shoot.

A few yards farther on they found a hole in the rock and sat crouched in a bunch round it, facing outwards.

The sun shone burning hot now, and the morning wind had died down. Dallu kept muttering under his breath, but the only audible words were "*oorial*" and a vicious Gurkhali oath. After a time he whispered very softly, "Sahib—must go A Company. They ready now. Heard shooting."

Tommy nodded. Two small stones rolled down the rocks and fell on his head. He gripped the pistol harder, but did not dare move or look up. It might be an enemy peering down to look for them. It might be the *oorial*. The hairs on the back of his head crawled and he felt cold.

The numbers of men round seemed to be increasing, and coming nearer. Dallu

Reckless Interlude

This intriguing new story by N. J. Crisp appears in JOHN BULL next week. Make sure that you don't miss it—order your copy today

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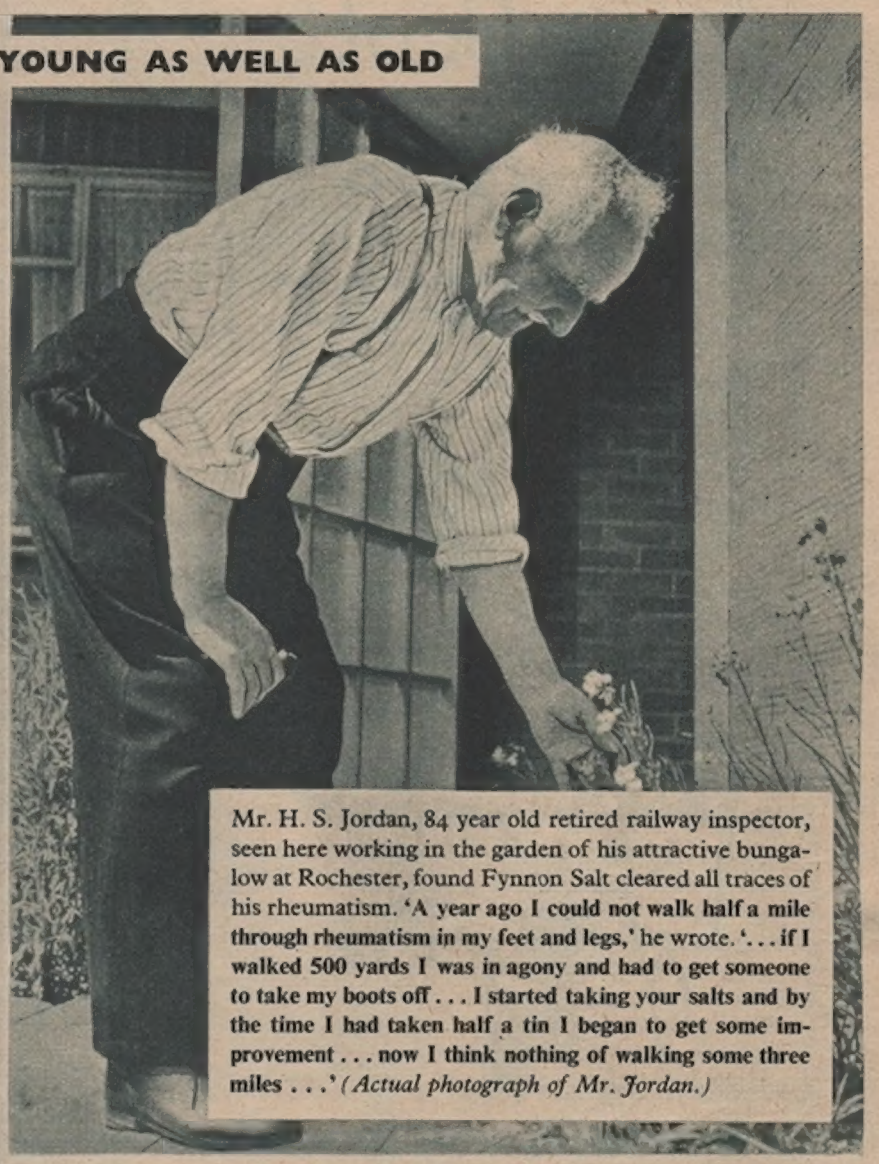
MOTHER OF SIX (30) AND RETIRED RAILWAY INSPECTOR (84) BOTH FOUND

Rheumatic misery relieved by using FYNNON SALT

RHEUMATISM ATTACKS YOUNG AS WELL AS OLD

Mrs. M.C., 30, housewife of Kilkeel, Co. Down (who wishes to remain anonymous), finds her six active children keep her pretty busy. She writes: '. . . I was suffering . . . with rheumatism. I got all kinds of rubs and liniments all to no avail. A friend told me about Fynnon Salt . . . I had a few tins . . . began to feel relief . . . now my rheumatism has completely vanished. I still take . . . Fynnon salt first thing in the morning and I feel wonderful the whole day.' *(Photograph posed by a model.) The originals of these letters can be seen at our offices.*



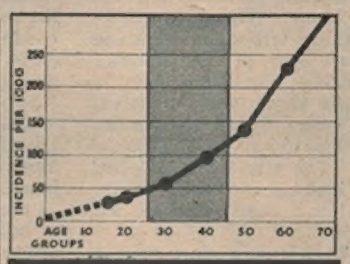
Mr. H. S. Jordan, 84 year old retired railway inspector, seen here working in the garden of his attractive bungalow at Rochester, found Fynnon Salt cleared all traces of his rheumatism. 'A year ago I could not walk half a mile through rheumatism in my feet and legs,' he wrote. '. . . if I walked 500 yards I was in agony and had to get someone to take my boots off . . . I started taking your salts and by the time I had taken half a tin I began to get some improvement . . . now I think nothing of walking some three miles . . .' *(Actual photograph of Mr. Jordan.)*

Encouraging news for Britain's one million adult rheumatic sufferers

IF YOU are suffering from this painful, stubborn and often disabling complaint, these letters will be encouraging news. For these experiences of a busy young housewife and an active older man are by no means isolated cases—both letters are typical of hundreds we have received from sufferers of all ages, expressing gratitude for the way Fynnon Salt has relieved their rheumatic pain. This is not surprising when you consider that Fynnon provides a treatment which is in complete accordance with modern scientific findings on rheumatism.

Early treatment advised

Findings show that rheumatism occurs most among the over 65s. But it was also found that fibrositis, neuritis, lumbago and the less persistent forms of rheumatism mostly attack those between the ages of 25 and 45. While the number of these cases appears to decline among elderly people, a proportion develop in later years into the more persistent kind of rheumatism, emphasising the need for early treatment.



This chart gives a conservative picture of rheumatism in Great Britain. The revelation that rheumatism often starts in middle life stresses the advisability of early treatment.

Fynnon's Two-Way Action

There is general agreement among the medical profession that improper elimination of waste products from the body accompanies and contributes to rheumatic conditions—such as neuritis, sciatica, fibrositis and gout. This emphasis on waste elimination explains why Fynnon Salt's two-way action has proved of such benefit to so many.

1. Fynnon Salt is an effective but gentle aperient working on the scientific principles of osmosis. This natural process utilises body fluid, drawn into the intestinal canal, to rid the system of waste matter.

2. It acts as a diuretic, flushing and clearing the kidneys and reducing the concentration of impurities in the blood—the approved treatment for certain rheumatic conditions.

The special virtue of Fynnon Salt lies in the even balance of its aperient and diuretic properties. Salts commonly have one or the other property to a marked degree, but Fynnon Salt has both in almost equal measure. Thus, by itself, Fynnon Salt is a complete internal cleansing agent. In composition it resembles the waters of certain spas, long famous for their success in treating rheumatism. *Act on first twinges—for Fynnon's unique combination of mineral salts can help you most if taken early, before the first twinges become a regular discomfort.*

A double treatment for rheumatism

Because there may be a number of causes of rheumatism, no possible line of attack should be ignored. Many enthusiastic users of Fynnon Salt are gaining especial benefit from the additional use of Fynnon Balm which is an entirely different, yet complementary, treatment for rheumatism, bringing 'deep relief' to underlying tissues and muscles by soothing away rheumatic pain. Either treatment can prove effective on its own, but many sufferers will obtain the greatest benefit from the two treatments used in combination. But, if you are seriously worried about your condition, don't fail to consult your doctor.

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For the relief of RHEUMATISM · FIBROSITIS
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CAPSTAN cigarettes are blended better

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***ANTACID* INDIGESTION TABLETS**

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My husband, although now turned 60, works for a large timber firm from 7.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and till mid-day on Saturdays. He has a hearty meal every lunch hour, mid-morning sandwiches and is always fit. As the tablets are sucked, Dad is walking back, knowing indigestion won't trouble him when he reaches his bench to continue his work."

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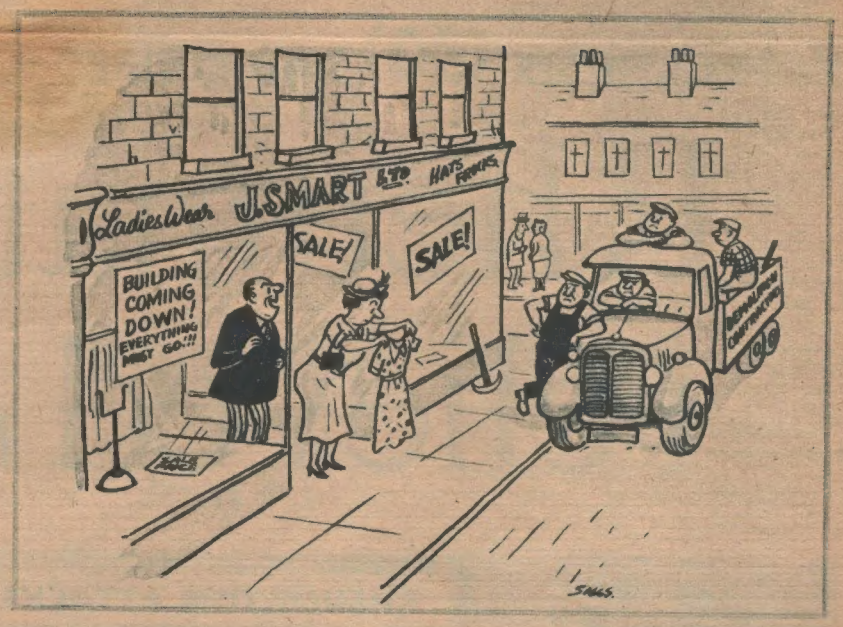
BRING SWEET RELIEF

8 rolls (80 tablets) 1/11d. 4 rolls (40 tablets) 1/-. From all chemists.



muttered, "Pretend! Sahib, go thirty yards, with Puransing. I blow whistle, you blow whistle, shout *'Charge!'* Run, shoot, make big noise. Mahsuds think we many, many! Rendezvous two hundred yards on."

Tommy crawled off at once with Puransing beside him. He felt sick with fright out there on the hillside.

They inched along on their stomachs under the bushes. Soon they saw Mahsuds—two of them standing in a clearing forty yards downhill, rifles unslung; and a third lying below the crest line as a look-out.

When they stopped, Tommy was ten yards from the man on the crest, and behind him. He rested his pistol on a low stone and took careful aim at the back of the Mahsud's head.

Dallu's whistle shrilled out loud from behind. A tremendous shouting began, and stones rolled and rifles cracked. The whistle blew again and again. It sounded like at least twenty men. The tribal look-out started up, but before he could raise his rifle Tommy blew out his brains.

Then Tommy found himself running, and yelling *"Charge!"* in a cracked voice. The others fired into the bushes as they ran. Tommy fired and fired till his pistol went *click-click* and was empty. And suddenly through a gap in the bushes A Company's perimeter wall loomed up a hundred yards in front. Gurkha heads showed over the top and round the sides of the headstones, and bayonets glittered. The company was alerted and stood-to.

Tommy ran towards them, shouting: "A Company! Don't shoot!"

In front of him, between him and A Company, the *oorial* burst over the ridge like a rocket. Lost, and bewildered by the firing, it galloped across A Company's front in great bounds and leaps. Dallu paled, looked round briefly, and dropped to his stomach. The crashing of the tribesmen in the bushes behind came closer.

DALLU waited. Ranbahadar swore. Puransing swore, Tommy swore—but they could not leave the old lunatic there alone. They turned to face the oncoming tribesmen. Several Mahsuds burst out of the bushes almost at once. Simultaneously, a fusillade of rifle shots and hysterical bursts from the light automatics whizzed and spattered and cracked around them. The tribesmen dropped out of sight. Dallu cursed very loudly and said, "Hit," and showed his wounded cheek.

Tommy realized with a start that A Company were not shooting at the enemy—they could not see them—but at the running *oorial*, and incidentally at him. This was his first battle, and it was lunacy, the maddest thing he'd ever been mixed up in.

A Company had missed the *oorial* in their excitement—rifles, light automatics, pistols, everything, all missed. It was still unhurt, going full tilt, and about eighty yards away. Dallu fired three times. His first two shots missed and went straight into A Company's perimeter. All the heads bobbed out of sight as though on a single string. Someone had seen them at last.

A voice yelled out, choking with laughter, "Eh, Dallu sahib! . . ." and then a few words of Gurkhali. Tommy translated painfully. "This is A Company. *We* haven't got horns!" Tommy began to swear, but he found himself laughing just the same.

At Dallu's third shot the *oorial* sprang high into the air, sailed over a small cliff like a skimming stone, and landed with a splintering crash out of sight ten feet below.

TOMMY, Dallu, Puransing and Ranbahadar jumped up and rushed forward. Behind them the Mahsuds began to fire, but now A Company replied and for a moment the four were running in a hailstorm of bullets from both directions. Then Tommy flung himself at the wall and two riflemen of A Company pulled him in. Puransing and Ranbahadur followed, vaulted over, and at once took positions behind headstones, firing steadily.

Tommy looked about him panting wildly. There was no sign of Dallu. He cried out, "Has the subahdar sahib been hit?" But all round, the men of A Company could hardly shoot for laughing. They were firing, fast and inaccurately, towards the tribesmen, but they were not looking in that direction. Bullets buzzed all over the hill, and ricochets whined off from every angle. A Gurkha just along the wall was killed even as Tommy watched. A bullet hit him in the neck as he turned sideways and laughed. The rest still looked sideways and laughed. In a daze, Tommy remembered the colonel saying: "A battle means very little to a Gurkha compared with a hunt, or a good rough practical joke."

At the side of the hill Subahdar Dallu appeared, scrambling up the little cliff, the heavy goat slung limp across his shoulders. Blood ran down him from the goat's carcass and from his own wounds. He staggered along, tripping and stumbling. Bullets kicked up the stones round his feet and plucked at his shirt. The dead goat was hit again.

He reached the wall, tossed the *oorial* over by a jerk of his shoulders and sprang in after it. Tommy cried, "Subahdar sahib, get down!"

Dallu took no notice of his officer. His face was choked with fury and his moustaches, drooping and caked with blood and dust, fluttered with the rage of his speech. He stood up in the storm of bullets, his head and shoulders clear above the low wall, and shook his fist, and yelled at the riflemen of A Company, half of them now doubled up with laughter and making no attempt to shoot.

The captain commanding A Company came up and Tommy said, "It wasn't your people's fault, sir. But they hit him, in the cheek."

The captain listened for a moment and then said, "Better come along and have some beer. He's putting the whole of my company into arrest for shooting at *his* damned goat!" THE END

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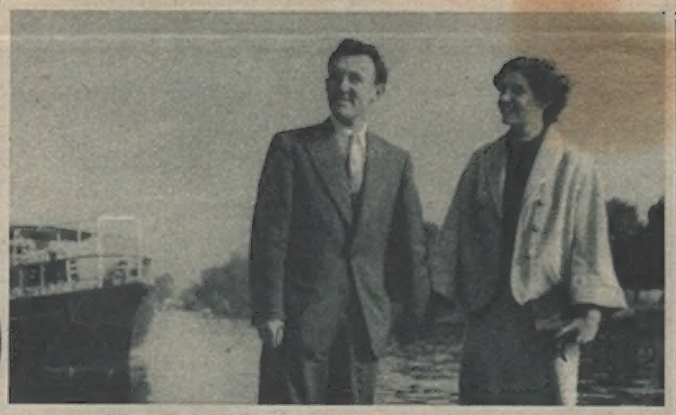

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Dream Of Prosperity	Just A Memory
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What They Need	Haywire
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For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 200 *Bullets* Seasons and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. as indicated. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to John Bull, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in "*Bullets*" *Bulletin* dated July 16 and in John Bull dated July 23), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, July 9, for early news of No. 1,993 result.)

POST BY MON., JUNE 27

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